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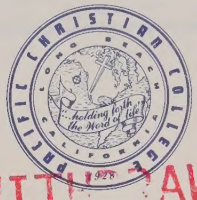

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THE PROCESSIONAL ROAD TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S THRONE-HALL, BABYLON

Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty?—Daniel 4. 30

TARBELL'S
TEACHERS' GUIDE

268
T179

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1922

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph.D.

7706

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Seminary
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Printed in United States of America

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.

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HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

SELECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FIRST QUARTER

I. **M.** 1 Sam. 8.10-18. SAMUEL'S WARNING.
T. 1 Kings 12.6-15. FOOLISH COUNSEL FOLLOWED.
W. 1 Kings 11.29-39. THE REVOLT FORETOLD.
T. 1 Kings 12.16-20. THE REVOLT ACCOMPLISHED.
F. Dan. 4.30-37. A KING HUMBLED.
S. Rom. 13.1-7. RULERS ARE GOD'S MINISTERS.
S. 2 Sam. 23.1-7. THE MODEL FOR ALL RULERS.

II. **M.** 1 Kings 16.29-33. ELIJAH'S OPPONENT.
T. 1 Kings 17.1-7. ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE.
W. 1 Kings 17.8-16. ELIJAH IN THE WIDOW'S HOME.
T. 1 Kings 17.17-24. ELIJAH RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON.
F. Mt. 6.25-34. ELIJAH'S FAITH TO BE OUR FAITH.
S. Ex. 16.11-18. ELIJAH'S GOD A BOUNTIFUL PROVIDER.
S. Ps. 62.1-8. ELIJAH'S GOD OUR GOD.

III. **M.** 1 Kings 18.7-15. ELIJAH'S WORD TESTED.
T. 1 Kings 18.16-20. THE CHALLENGE.
W. 1 Kings 18.21-29. THE DEFEAT.
T. 1 Kings 18.30-39. THE VICTORY.
F. Joshua 24.14-21. JOSHUA'S CHARACTER-TEST.
S. Eph. 6.10-20. PAUL'S CHARACTER-TEST.
S. Ps. 2.1-3, 7-12. THE KING ENTHRONED.

IV. **M.** 1 Kings 18.41-46. THE PROPHET TRIUMPHANT.
T. 1 Kings 19.1-8. THE PROPHET DESPONDENT.
W. 1 Kings 19.9-18. THE PROPHET ENCOURAGED.
T. Num. 11.10-15. DISCOURAGED IN SERVICE.
F. Ezek. 2.3-7. UNAPPRECIATED SERVICE.
S. Acts 18.1-11. SECURITY IN SERVICE.
S. Psalm 42.6-11. OUR INSPIRATION AND OUR HELP.

V. **M.** 1 Kings 21.5-14. COVETOUSNESS BRINGS MURDER.
T. 1 Kings 21.17-26. COVETOUSNESS BRINGS JUDGMENT.
W. Amos 8.4-10. COVETOUSNESS DESCRIBED.
T. Josh. 7.16-22. AN EXAMPLE OF COVETOUSNESS.
F. 2 Kings 5.20-27. COVETOUSNESS PUNISHED.
S. 1 Tim. 6.1-11. COVETOUSNESS RENOUNCED.
S. Ps. 43.1-5. THE JOY OF DELIVERANCE.

VI. **M.** 2 Kings 2.1-11. ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.
T. 2 Kings 2.12-18. THE FRUITLESS SEARCH.
W. Gen. 5.21-24. ENOCH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.
T. Deut. 34.1-8. MOSES TAKEN TO HEAVEN.
F. Mark 9.2-8. THE TRANSFIGURATION.
S. 2 Tim. 4.1-8. PAUL'S HOPE OF HEAVEN.
S. 1 Thess. 4.13-18. OUR ASSURANCE OF HEAVEN.

VII. **M.** 2 Kings 4.8-13. THE WOMAN'S HOSPITALITY.
T. 2 Kings 4.14-22. THE WOMAN'S SORROW.
W. 2 Kings 4.25-30. THE WOMAN'S FAITH.
T. 2 Kings 4.31-37. THE WOMAN'S REWARD.
F. Acts 9.36-42. A WOMAN RESTORED.
S. John 11.18-29. THE MESSAGE TO MARTHA.
S. 1 Cor. 15.50-58. THE MESSAGE TO ALL.

VIII. **M.** 2 Kings 5.1-4. THE LEPROUS CAPTAIN.
T. 2 Kings 5.5-9. THE CAPTAIN'S JOURNEY.
W. 2 Kings 5.10-14. THE CAPTAIN HEALED.
T. 2 Kings 5.15-19. THE CAPTAIN'S GRATITUDE.
F. Lk. 4.16-27. THE GREAT HEALER.
S. Mk. 1.39-45. THE HEALER AT WORK.
S. Ps. 103.1-12. OUR MERCIFUL GOD.

IX. **M.** 2 Kings 6.8-17. ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS.
T. Dan. 6.16-23. DANIEL'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS.
W. 2 Chron. 32.6-8, 21, 22. HEZEKIAH'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS.
T. Dan. 3.19-25. THE HEBREW CHILDREN'S HEAVENLY DEFENDER.
F. Acts 12.5-11. PETER'S HEAVENLY DEFENDER.
S. 2 Tim. 4.14-18. PAUL'S HEAVENLY DEFENDER.
S. Psalm 34.1-8. OUR HEAVENLY DEFENDER.

X. **M.** Jonah 1.10. RESISTING GOD'S CALL.
T. Jonah 2.1-9. FACING THE ISSUE.

W. Jonah 3.1-10. Jehovah's Mercy to Nineveh.
T. Mt. 12.38-45. A Greater than Jonah.
F. Ps. 96.1-13. Praise to the King.
S. Ps. 145.8-19. Jehovah's Mercy to All.
S. Isa. 55.1-9. The Gracious Call.

XI. M. Amos 6.1-8. Amos Warns Israel.
T. Amos 2.10-16. Tempting God's Leaders.
W. Amos 5.10-15. Be Generous and Just.
T. Amos 5.21-27. Insincere Worship.
F. Prov. 1.7-19. Danger of Evil Companions.
S. Eph. 5.1-14. Children of Light.
S. Ps. 15.1-5. A Citizen of Zion.

XII. M. 2 Kings 17.1-12. The Sin of Israel.
T. 2 Kings 17.13-18. The Judgment on Israel.
W. Hosea 7.1-10. The Deceptive Character of Sin.
T. Isa. 8.5-10. The Downfall Foretold.
F. 2 Kings 16.1-9. A Dangerous Alliance.
S. 2 Kings 16.10-18. Corrupting Worship.
S. Ps. 1. "The Way of the Righteous."

XIII. M. 1 Kings 12.12-20. The Revolt of Jeroboam.
T. 1 Kings 17.1-16. Elijah the Tishbite.
W. 1 Kings 18.30-39. Jehovah is God.
T. 2 Kings 2.1-11. The Prophet's Reward.
F. 2 Kings 6.13-19. Elisha's Heavenly Defenders.
S. Jonah 3.1-10. The Mercy of Jehovah.
S. Ps. 130. The Forgiveness of Jehovah.

SECOND QUARTER

I. M. 2 Chron. 14.1-8. A Good King.
T. 2 Chron. 14.9-13. Trusting God in Time of War.
W. 2 Chron. 15.1-12. Trusting God in Time of Peace.
T. Ps. 27.1-14. A Song of Trust.
F. Esther 4.9-17. A Queen's Reliance on God.
S. Dan. 3.8-18. Three Princes Rely on God.
S. Ps. 145.1-10. The Power and Goodness of God.

II. M. 2 Kings 11.1-12. How a Boy Became King.
T. 2 Kings 11.13-20. How God's Priest Helped.
W. 2 Chron. 22.10 to 23.11. The Story Retold.
T. Ex. 2.1-10. God Preserves Moses.
F. Gen. 39.1-6. God Preserves Joseph.
S. Mt. 2.13-23. God Preserves the Child Jesus.
S. Ps. 145.10-21. God Saves and Satisfies.

III. M. John 20.1-10. The Empty Tomb.
T. John 20.11-18. Jesus Appears to Mary.
W. John 20.19-23. Jesus Appears to the Ten.
T. John 20.24-31. Jesus and Thomas.
F. John 21.1-8. Jesus Appears in Galilee.
S. John 21.9-14. Jesus and Seven Disciples.
S. Ps. 16.1-11. Jehovah Our Deliverer.

IV. M. 2 Chron. 26.1-10. A Godly King.
T. 2 Chron. 26.11-21. Pride and Punishment.
W. 2 Kings 15.1-7. The Story Retold.
T. Prov. 20.1-11. Deceived through Drink.
F. Deut. 8.11-20. Warning against Pride.
S. 2 Kings 5.20-27. A Covetous Servant Punished.
S. Prov. 16.18-25. The Grace of Humility.

V. M. Isa. 6.1-13. God Calls Isaiah.
T. Gen. 12.1-9. God Calls Abram.
W. Ex. 3.1-12. God Calls Moses.
T. Joshua 1.1-9. God Calls Joshua.
F. Jer. 1.4-19. God Calls Jeremiah.
S. Mt. 10.1-15. Jesus Calls His Disciples.
S. Ps. 67.1-7. God's Help and Blessing.

VI. M. Isa. 2.1-14. The Gathering of the Nations.
T. Isa. 11.1-9. World-Peace Promised.
W. Isa. 9.1-7. The Coming of the Prince of Peace.
T. Micah 5.1-8. The Givers of Peace.
F. Mt. 5.1-12. The Peacemaker Blessed.
S. Gal. 5.16-25. Purity and Peace.
S. Ps. 46.1-11. God Our Refuge.

VII. M. 2 Chron. 29.1-11. A Godly King's Edict.
T. 2 Chron. 29.12-19. The Temple Cleansed.
W. 2 Chron. 29.20-30. Sacrifices Presented.
T. 2 Chron. 29.31-36. Sacrifices Offered.
F. 2 Chron. 30.1-12. Call to Worship.
S. 2 Chron. 30.13-27. The Solemn Assembly.
S. Ps. 96.1-10. Joyous Worship.

VIII. M. 2 Chron. 34.1-7. Cleansing the Land.
T. 2 Chron. 34.8-13. Repairing the Temple.
W. 2 Chron. 34.14-21. Hilkiah's Great Discovery.
T. 2 Chron. 34.22-28. The Message of the Word.
F. 2 Chron. 34.29-33. The Word Obeyed.

S. 2 Tim. 2.1-15. Teaching the Word.
S. Ps. 19.7-14. The Priceless Word of God.

IX. M. Jer. 26.1-9. Jeremiah Speaks Boldly for God.
T. Jer. 26.10-19. Jeremiah Threatened with Death.
W. 2 Sam. 12.1-15. A Brave Prophet's Message.
T. 1 Kings 21.17-27. Elijah Reproves Ahab.
F. Jer. 7.1-11. Jeremiah Reproves Israel.
S. Amos 6.1-11. Amos Reproves Sinful Indulgence.
S. Ps. 103.13-22. God's Mercy to the Obedient.

X. M. Jer. 36.1-8. God's Word Received and Recorded.
T. Jer. 36.9-19. God's Word Read to the People.
W. Jer. 36.20-26. The King Tries to Destroy God's Word.
T. Jer. 36.27-32. The Prophet Rewrites God's Word.
F. Isa. 55.1-13. God's Covenant Word.
S. Mt. 5.17-26. Jesus and God's Word.
S. Isa. 40.1-8. God's Word Shall Stand Forever.

XI. M. Jer. 37.1-10. The Prophet's Warning.
T. Jer. 37.11-15. The Prophet Accused and Imprisoned.
W. Jer. 37.16-21. The Prophet Appeals to the King.
T. Jer. 38.1-6. The Prophet Consigned to the Dungeon.
F. Jer. 38.7-13. The Prophet Rescued from the Dungeon.
S. Luke 3.15-20. John the Baptist Imprisoned.
S. Ps. 40.1-8. Jehovah's Deliverance.

XII. M. 2 Kings 24.1-9. A Servile King.
T. 2 Kings 24.10-20. A Captive King.
W. 2 Kings 25.1-12. The Downfall of Judah.
T. 2 Kings 25.13-21. The Temple and the Land Despoiled.
F. Deut. 28.15-24. God Warns His People.
S. Luke 19.41-48. Jesus Warns Jerusalem.
S. Ps. 137.1-6. Sorrow in Captivity.

XIII. M. 2 Chron. 14.1-8. A Good King.
T. 2 Kings 12.9-16. Giving and Working for God's House.
W. 2 Chron. 26.11-21. Pride and Punishment.
T. Isa. 6.1-12. God's Call to Isaiah.
F. 2 Chron. 30.1-12. A Call to Worship.
S. Jer. 36.20-26. The King Tries to Destroy God's Word.
S. 2 Kings 25.1-12. The Downfall of Judah.

THIRD QUARTER

I. M. Ezek. 2.1-10. Ezekiel's Commission.
T. Ezek. 3.16-21. Ezekiel, the Watchman of Israel.
W. Isa. 21.5-12. Watchmen on the Towers.
T. Isa. 55.1-7. The Invitation to All.
F. Luke 12.35-40. Watching for the King.
S. Rev. 3.1-6. A Watchful Church.
S. Ps. 121. Watching Over All.

II. M. Dan. 2.31-35. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.
T. Dan. 2.36-45. Daniel's Interpretation.
W. Gen. 32.24-30. Jacob and the Angel.
T. Gen. 41.1-7. Pharaoh's Dreams.
F. Gen. 41.25-32. Joseph's Interpretation.
S. Acts 10.9-15. Peter's Vision.
S. Isa. 11.1-10. Isaiah's Vision.

III. M. Dan. 5.1-4. The Drunken Feast.
T. Dan. 5.5-9. The Handwriting on the Wall.
W. Dan. 5.25-31. The Explanation.
T. Prov. 23.29-35. Temperance for Self
F. 1 Cor. 8.1-13. Temperance for Others.
S. 1 Cor. 3.16-23. Temperance for God.
S. Isa. 35.1-10. A Redeemed World.

IV. M. Dan. 6.4-10. Daniel and the King's Decree.
T. Dan. 6.16-23. Daniel and the Lions.
W. Dan. 1.8-21. Daniel's First Test.
T. Gen. 22.1-3; 16-19. Abraham's Trial.
F. 1 Kings 18.30-40. Elijah on Mt. Carmel.
S. Heb. 11.32-40. Faith Triumphant.
S. Rom. 8.31-39. Conquerors through Christ.

V. M. Ezra 1.1-11. The First Return from Exile.
T. Lev. 26.27-36. The Captivity Foretold.
W. Jer. 29.15-19. The Captivity a Judgment.
T. Rom. 7.16-25. Captives of Sin.
F. Rom. 8.1-10. Freedom through Christ.
S. Ps. 137.1-9. The Captives' Cry.
S. Ps. 85.1-9. The King's Response.

VI. M. Ezra 3.8-13. Rebuilding the Temple.
T. Ezra 6.13-22. Dedicating the Temple.
W. 2 Chron 2.1-10. The Greatness of the Temple.
T. 1 Kings 8.5-11. God's Dwelling-place.
F. 1 Kings 8.22-30. Solomon's Prayer.
S. 2 Kings 25.8-17. The Temple Destroyed.
S. Ps. 100. Praise in the Temple.

VII. M. Esther 1.1-8. The Feast of Ahasuerus.
T. Esther 1.9-12. Vashti, the Queen.

W. Esther 2.15-20. Esther Chosen Queen.
T. Esther 3.8-15. Haman's Plot.
F. Esther 4.10 to 5.3. Esther's Courage.
S. Esther 8.3-8. Esther's Triumph.
S. Ps. 34.1-8. Guardian Angels.

VIII. M. Ezra 7.6-10. Ezra.
T. Ezra 7.11-13, 25-28. Ezra's Commission.
W. Ezra 8.21-32. The Second Return from Exile.
T. Ex. 3.1-10. Moses Called to Leadership.
F. Isa. 6.1-12. Isaiah's Call.
S. Acts 9.1-9. The Call of Saul.
S. Ps. 107.1-9. Praise for Deliverance.

IX. M. Neh. 1.1-11. Nehemiah's Prayer.
T. Ezra 9.5-15. Ezra's Prayer.
W. Gen. 18.23-32. Abraham's Prayer.
T. Judges 6.22-24, 36-40. Gideon's Prayer.
F. Eph. 3.14-21. Paul's Prayer.
S. Mt. 6.9-15. The Lord's Prayer.
S. Ps. 42.1-8. Encouragement to Pray

X. M. Neh. 4.7-12. Plotting Enemies.
T. Neh. 4.13-21. Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem.
W. Deut. 3.1-8. Bashan's Walls.
T. Josh. 6.12-20. Jericho's Walls.
F. Isa. 52.1-10. The Song of the Watchmen.
S. Isa. 62.1-9. Watchmen of Zion.
S. Ps. 48.1, 2, 9-14. The Glory of Zion.

XI. M. Neh. 8.1-12. Teaching the Law of God.
T. Ps. 19.7-14. The Law of God.
W. 2 Tim. 3.14 to 4.4. The Law Inspired.
T. Ps. 119.1-8. Keeping the Law.
F. Ps. 78.1-8. Teaching the Children.
S. Luke 4.16-21. The Great Teacher at Work.
S. Ps. 119.97-105. Love for the Law.

XII. M. Mal. 3.1-9. Israel's Sin.
T. Mal. 3.10-18. God's Promise.
W. Mal. 4.1-6 God's Judgment and Blessing.
T. Ps. 1.1-6. The Righteous and Wicked Contrasted.
F. Mt. 25.41-46. The Wicked Punished.
S. Mt. 5.1-12. The Righteous Blessed.
S. Ps. 32.1-7. The Blessedness of Forgiveness.

XIII. M. Ezek. 3.16-21. Ezekiel the Watchman.
T. Dan. 6.4-10. Daniel the Courageous.
W. Esther 4.10 to 5.3. Esther the Noblehearted.
T. Ezra 7.6-10. Ezra the Scribe.
F. Neh. 4.7-20. Nehemiah the Builder.
S. Ps. 19.7-14. The Law of the Lord.
S. Ps. 66.1-5, 16-20. The Goodness of God.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. M. Isa. 40.3-5. The Prophet's Message.
T. Lk. 1.5-17. The Angel's Message.
W. Lk. 1.57-66. The Birth of John the Baptist.
T. 1 Sam. 1.9-18. Hannah's Prayer.
F. 1 Sam. 2.1-10. Hannah's Thanksgiving.
S. Col. 3.17-25. A Christian Home.
S. Lk. 1.68-79. Zacharias's Prophecy.

II. M. Lk. 2.1-7. The Birth of Jesus.
T. Lk. 2.8-20. The Shepherd's Visit.
W. Lk. 2.25-39. The Child in the Temple.
T. Lk. 2.40-52. The Boyhood of Jesus.
F. 1 Sam. 16.4-18. The Boyhood of David.
S. 2 Tim. 3.14-17. The Boyhood of Timothy.
S. Isa. 9.1-7. The King's Birth and Kingdom.

III. M. Lk. 3.1-9. The Preaching Prophet.
T. Mt. 3.13-16. John Baptizing Jesus.
W. Jn. 1.19-28. John Tells about Himself.
T. Jn. 1.29-37. John Testifies to Jesus.
F. Lk. 7.18-23. John Wonders about Jesus.
S. Lk. 7.24-35. Jesus's Testimony to John.
S. Isa. 40.1-11. Glad Tidings from the Wilderness.

IV. M. Lk. 4.1-13. Jesus Tempted.
T. Heb. 2.14-18. The Purpose of His Temptations.
W. 1 Tim. 6.6-10. A Common Temptation.
T. 1 Cor. 10.1-13. Overcoming Temptation.
F. Jas. 1.12-18. The Sources of Temptation.
S. Rev. 3.18-22. The Secret of Victory.
S. Heb. 4.14—5.10. Jesus Our High Priest.

V. M. Isa. 61.1-9. A Righteous Nation.
T. Prov. 14.28-35. Sin a National Reproach.
W. Mt. 7.15-27. The True Foundation.
T. Rom. 1.18-23. National Neglect.
F. Amos 6.1-6. The Nations Tested.

HOME DAILY READINGS

S. Mt. 25.31-46. The Nations Judged.
S. Ps. 93. Jehovah Reigneth.

VI. M. Lk. 5.17-26. Jesus the Great Physician.
T. Isa. 61.1-6 Jesus's Healing Foretold.
W. Lk. 4.31-37. Power Over Unclean Spirits.
T. Mk. 1.29-39. The Healer at Work.
F. Mt. 4.23-25. Teaching, Preaching, Healing.
S. Jas. 5.13-18. Praying for the Sick.
S. Isa. 63.7-14. God Our Savior.

VII. M. Lk. 6.27-38. Jesus the Great Teacher.
T. Mt. 5.1-12. Jesus Teaches about Happiness.
W. Mt. 5.13-16 Jesus Teaches about Influence.
T. Mt. 4.43-48. Jesus Teaches about Love.
F. Mt. 6.5-15. Jesus Teaches about Prayer.
S. Mt. 7.13-23. Jesus Teaches about True Religion.
S. Ps. 119.9-16. The Great Teachers's Text-Book.

VIII. M. Lk. 7.37-48. Jesus the Friend of Sinners.
T. Lk. 19.1-10. He Came to Seek and to Save.
W. Lk. 15.1-7. The Lost Sheep.
T. Lk. 15.11-32. The Erring Son.
F. Rom. 3.19-23. "All Have Sinned."
S. Rom. 8.1-11. Jesus Saves.
S. Ps. 51.1-10. A Prayer for Pardon.

IX. M. Lk. 8.26-39. Jesus the Great Missionary.
T. Lk. 8.4-15. The Parable of the Sower.
W. Mt. 15.21-28. A Gentile Believer.
T. Mt. 28.16-20. The Great Commission.
F. Rom. 1.8-17. The Missionary Spirit.
S. Acts 26.12-20. The Missionary Call.
S. Ps. 47. "God Reigneth over the Nations."

X. M. Lk. 9.1-9. The Twelve Sent Forth.
T. Lk. 9.10-17. Feeding the Hungry.
W. Lk. 9.18-27. Sacrificing for Christ's Sake.
T. Lk. 9.28-36. The Authority of Jesus.
F. Lk. 9.37-46. Suffering Humanity.
S. Lk. 10.1-17. The Seventy Sent Forth.
S. Mt. 28.16-20. The Great Commission.

XI. M. Lk. 10.25-37. Story of the Good Samaritan.
T. 1. Jn. 3.13-24. Love, the Test.
W. 1 Jn. 4.7-21. Love Necessary.
T. Jn. 9.1-12. How Jesus Helped.
F. Jas. 2.14-26. Faith and Works.
S. 1 Cor. 13.1-13. Love never Fails.
S. Ps. 41.1-4, 10-13. Considering the Poor.

XII. M. Lk. 10.38-42. Jesus among Friends.
T. Lk. 11.14-26. Jesus among Foes.
W. Lk. 11.37-44. Jesus among the Pharisees.
T. Jn. 16.25-33. Friendship Tested.
F. Jn. 17.1-13. A Blessed Fellowship.
S. Mt. 26.36-46. Friendship's Failure in a Crisis.
S. Jn. 15.8-16. Friends of Jesus.

XIII. M. Lk. 12.16-21. A Lesson in Folly.
T. Lk. 12.35-40. A Lesson in Watchfulness.
W. Lk. 12.41-48. A Lesson in Faithfulness.
T. Mt. 25.1-13. A Lesson in Preparedness.
F. 1 Tim. 6.3-10. A Lesson in Contentment.
S. 2 Tim. 4.1-8. A Lesson in Keeping the Faith.
S. Lk. 12.22-31. A Lesson in Trust.

XIV. M. Lk. 2.8-20. The Birth of Jesus.
T. Lk. 3.1-6. John the Forerunner.
W. Lk. 4.1-13. Jesus Tempted.
T. Lk. 6.39-49. Jesus the Teacher
F. Lk. 7.36-50. Jesus the Savior.
S. Lk 10.38-42. Jesus the Friend.
S. Isa. 32.1-8. Jesus the King.

A FEW HELPFUL BOOKS

The following is a list of the books referred to in the treatment of the lessons. For convenience they are given here with names of authors and publishers, and with prices.

According to My Gospel. Dr. Hugh Black. Revell. $1.25.
A Cry for Justice: A Study in Amos. Professor John Edgar McFadyen. Scribners. $1.25.
A More Christian Industrial Order. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin. Macmillan. $1.00.
Bible a Missionary Book, The. Dr. R. F. Horton. Pilgrim Press. $.75.
Bible as a Community Book, The. Arthur E. Holt. Pilgrim Press. $1.35.
Bible Characters: Vol. III. Dr. Alexander Whyte. Revell. $1.25.
Book of the Twelve Prophets. Expositor's Bible. Dr. George Adam Smith. Doran. 2 vols. Each, $1.25.
Called of God. Dr. A. B. Davidson. Scribners. $2.75.
Character of Jesus, The. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson. Crowell. $2.50.
Elijah and the Secret of His Power. F. B. Meyer. Revell. $1.00.
Five Young Men. Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown. Revell. $1.00.
God's Missionary Plan for the World. Bishop J. W. Bashford. Abingdon Press. $1.25.
Great Characters of the Old Testament. Dr. Robert W. Rogers. Abingdon Press. $1.00.
Historic Christ in the Faith of Today, The. William Alexander Grist. Revell. $2.50.
History of the Jewish Church, The. Vol. II. Dean Stanley. Scribners. $1.25.
In the Master's Country: A Geography of Palestine in the Time of Christ. Dr. Martha Tarbell. Doran. $0.75.
Isaiah. 2 vols. Expositor's Bible. Dr. George Adam Smith. Doran. Each, $1.25.
Jesus Christ and the Social Question. Professor Francis G. Peabody. Macmillan. $1.75.
Jesus of History, The. T. R. Glover. Association Press. $1.50.
Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah. Professor Charles Foster Kent. Scribners. $1.50.
Master's Way, The. Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown. Pilgrim Press. $2.25.
Meaning of Service, The. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Association Press. $1.25.
Prophets in the Light of Today, The. John Godfrey Hill. Abingdon Press. $1.50.
Prophets of the Old Testament, The. Dr. Alexander R. Gordon. Doran. $2.00.
Religion and Business. R. W. Babson. Macmillan. $1.50.
Religion of Israel. John Bayne Ascham. Abingdon Press. $1.00.
Religion of Judah. John Bayne Ascham. Abingdon Press. $1.50.
Secret of Prayer Life, The. Dr. John R. Mott. Association Press. $.05.
Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus, The. J. A. Robertson. Pilgrim Press. $1.60.
Studies of the Man Christ Jesus. Dr. Robert E. Speer. Revell. $1.00.
Zechariah, the Prophet of Hope. F. B. Meyer. Revell. $1.00.

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1922

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Mandatories. Since the War, the scope and usefulness of the word *mandatory* have been greatly enlarged. Individuals as well as nations are mandatories. To both alike falls the task of performing without compensation certain services for certain peoples.

Here in my Introduction I have the happy feeling that I am meeting you, my fellow teachers, informally, and that I can talk with you upon somewhat personal matters. You have accepted mandates for one of the most important of Christian services. You realize, as Mr. Heinz was wont to say, that the Sunday-school pays larger dividends than any other investment you make. But there are those among you who have been long in the service, and you are thinking that now you may retire with honor. I am constantly meeting men and women wise in Bible lore, rich in Christian experience, skilled in the art of teaching, who yet have dropped out of the work. "Let the young people carry it on," they say. They would be most unwilling to give up their vocation to the younger generation: why should they so willingly turn over to it their avocation? If you are not ready to retire from all active work, then do not withdraw from this service which stands so much in need of further recruits. Possibly, though, you may need to cultivate the spirit of Mr. A. I. Root, "the bee man," of whom it is said that, "Although nearly eighty years of age, he bubbles with enthusiasm, new ideas, and the desire to make new experiments. His mind is still young. He is up-to-date in everything. He simply will not grow old."

Are there those among you who deem yourselves too inexperienced for the work, and are wondering whether you may not give it up—even though without honor—on the ground that you are not wise enough students of the Bible, or of young people, or of right methods of instruction? Then you should give more time to preparation for teaching, but you should not drop the work, for you are greatly needed. During the War, when a recruit entered training camp and was directed to serve as cook, he cheerfully complied. It was not his metier, he knew nothing whatever about cooking, had not been inside a kitchen since the days when he went there for stolen cookies, yet this was the service required from him and he proceeded to make good in his job. May I not add, Go thou and do likewise?

The Shortage of Teachers. The discouraging feature in our schools just now is the shortage of teachers. Since I talked with you a year ago churches and schools have made phenomenal gains. "The churches of America in 1919 were in the Slough of Despond," writes Dr. H. K. Carroll, in his compilation of the latest official census of religions; "in 1920 they are again on the Hills of Progress." But the cry on every hand is that "We cannot find teachers." The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the

Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into the harvest—pray, and work also to help answer your prayers.

Advertisers in these days study psychology. And from their psychology the word *sell* is acquiring a new meaning. You "sell" a thing when you cause people to want it. Mr. Ford "sells" tractor farming. Billy Sunday "sells" religion. During the Great War the newspapers and other agencies *sold* the desirability of patriotic service, so that young women from prosperous homes went out to do Red Cross work and to enter government positions, and young men gave up lucrative occupations to enter the army as privates, and heads of big businesses became dollar-a-year men. Now comes the urgent call for teachers in the church-schools. And now you of the present teaching force have the opportunity to "sell" enthusiasm for religious teaching. Enjoy your own work and show that you do. Take pride in your work and show that. Magnify the teaching office.

Dr. J. H. Jowett saw wretched, starved-looking sandwich-men walking the streets of London, carrying on their boards an advertisement of "the best dinner in London." "Famished wretches advertising the best dinners!" he exclaimed. "Cheerless men and women advertising 'the joy of the Lord'! Heralds in whom there is no buoyancy advertising the Light of Life! No, it is the cheery spirit, the praiseful spirit, that offers the best commendation of the grace of God!"

Have you ever said that you hate to spend so much time in preparing to teach? Do you ever get ready for school with a sigh, and leave your house with a groan, and take off your hat when you return with a yawn, and complain between times that the work is a bore? It is such reluctant service which prevents other people from entering the field.

If the school in which you labor is sadly in need of additional teachers, there is something the matter with its present teaching force. The school that can not secure good teachers as new classes are formed is the school that has a corps of mainly unenthusiastic teachers. The school whose teachers are able and earnest and enthusiastic, has other good teachers on its waiting list, and is in a position to put its strength on "selling" attendance to the pupils.

The right wing of our school army has been broken by the desertion of many in the ranks; the left wing has disintegrated under the influence of untrained leaders: it is time to move forward with our dependable center to a successful attack.

Five Results that the Successful Teacher Accomplishes. He so teaches as to cause his pupils (1) to come expecting an interesting and profitable lesson period; (2) to acquire a liking for a lesson containing unity—centered about one main thought; (3) to feel responsible for making the definite contributions to each lesson hour which he assigns them; (4) to go from each lesson with a purpose of action based on the belief or the feeling inspired by the lesson, and when possible to carry that purpose out into deeds, even into habits; (5) to meditate during the week on the problems raised in class and often to bring to class the week following solutions of such problems or questions.

1. Pupils will not come expecting an interesting and profitable lesson period if you do not *treat their minds with respect.* "The best books for children are those that never were intended for children," declares Professor William Lyon Phelps of Yale University. "The ordinary child's Christmas book has an intolerable air of condescension like the ingratiating smile of a professional speaker to boys, who deceives only those in bad health. Even children deserve intellectual respect and profit from it." They deserve spiritual respect likewise. Dr. Jowett's thoughts are always arresting: "We can have experience long before we can have explanation. We can have life before we can have light. A child can lisp and talk long before it knows our alphabet exists. Life can have communion with the unseen long before intellect begins to survey the road."

To find the lesson hour interesting and profitable pupils must be convinced that the events studied *really happened.* One of Joseph Conrad's British characters says that on meeting a Southerner he discovered he "had never been aware before that the Civil War in America was not merely printed matter but a fact (then) only ten years old." "Palestine has been for me on this earth only since the Great War," said a friend the other day. "When I read in the newspaper that General Allenby was entering Jerusalem, then and only then did I actually realize that the Jerusalem of the Bible was a reality."

There is space here to speak of but one sure method of making the lesson hour

both interesting and profitable, alike for old and young, and that is by the use of *stories which aptly illustrate the truths* you are teaching. Make the story one of your chief means of instruction. Freely use examples and anecdotes from your own experience and observation, for what you have experienced or heard has great weight with your pupils.

Mr. George Herbert Betts gives three principles as to the use of stories in the teaching of religion: (1) see that they are charged with religious and moral value; (2) make sure that they are adapted to the age of the learner; (3) tell them well. The first two principles I have endeavored to carry out in the stories given with each lesson topic: the responsibility for the third falls upon you. Study the story as you do any other part of the lesson until you are sure you can tell it interestingly. Naturally you will give far more detail in Intermediate than in Adult classes.

Let the application of the story be made by the pupils themselves—do not add the moral. Do you recall the chapter in Eden Phillpott's Old Delabole where Edith has been telling the two children, May and Betty, a story which they had heard before? Both listened patiently until Edith said, "And doesn't that show how God—" when Betty interrupted. "We know all the rest," said she. "We didn't say anything till you'd got *there,* but Aunt Julitta told us the story ages ago, and we hadn't forgot the Sunday part, so you needn't tell it over again." Her attitude is that of every normal child. Children—grown-ups, too—will enjoy the story and will find the lesson embodied therein—they do not want the application made for them and tacked on to the story as an appendage.

There are teachers so desirous of bringing in all the admonition possible in the course of the lesson period that they almost follow the old lady's tactics told about in A Book of Laughter. With a group of nephews and nieces she was going the round of a museum. The guide had just said in a very impressive voice:

"Here you see the waistcoat worn by Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar. The bullet that ended his life went through this hole here."

And the dear old lady said:

"You see, children! Haven't I always warned you against carelessness and untidiness? If that hole had been mended at the proper time, the bullet could not have gone through it, and dear Nelson would still be alive."

If you wish the story to teach a moral other than the obvious one, don't tell it! Get another story. Exception to this principle may only be made when you are sure that you can give the moral with as telling effect as did a lecturer at Smith College once upon a time. He told the students about Stephen A. Douglas slumped in a chair in a profound sleep in the corridor of the capitol. Adaline Cutts, a Washington belle, passed by. She did not know him but was struck with compassion on seeing such a splendidly intellectual countenance exposed thus to the public gaze, and stooping down she partially covered his face with her handkerchief. Douglas on awakening found the handkerchief, sought the owner, and eventually married her. After a pause the lecturer added: "Young ladies, the moral of this story is, have your pocket handkerchief marked!"

2. Pupils rightly taught will acquire a liking for a lesson containing unity of thought.

"Wing the course of time with *music,*—
Music of the grand old *days:*—
Days when hearts were pure and *noble,*—
Noble in their simple *ways;*—
Ways, however rough, yet *earnest,*—
Earnest in the cause of *truth;*—
Truth that teaches us a *lesson,*—
Lesson worthy *age* and *youth;*—
Youth and *age* alike may *listen,*—
Listen, meditate, *improve;*—
Improve in happiness and *glory,*—
Glory that doth heavenward move."

Have you not talked with persons whose minds run along like the lines of this quotation, moving from point to point, each point suggesting by some association the next one, but no unity being possible since no central thought or purpose

governs the selection of the associations followed? After a conversation with a possessor of this sort of mind you say to yourself, "Now what was it all about?" It was about anything—that is, nothing.

Have you ever listened to a Sunday-school teacher whose mind worked somewhat after this fashion? Have you ever allowed your own mind to browse about in this way? If your pupils do not know what it has all been about when the lesson hour is over, is it possible that you have taught in a somewhat similar way?

Disciplined minds are necessary if God's Kingdom is to come with our help. Teaching must be well done. The teacher's scholarship on each particular lesson should be full, so full that he will need to exercise restraint in its presentation. In every lesson there is a pivotal point which must not be omitted. There are also numerous points which, though closely related and even highly important, are not essential, and these may have to be omitted in order to preserve the unity of the impression.

You may present the lessons with all the vivacity of a motion picture, but each lesson should finally stand out in the mind of your pupils with the unity and stability of a statuary group.

3. Take a few moments, preferably at the beginning of the lesson period, to assign definite home work which your pupils will be interested in doing. Never tell them to "study their lessons." It is astonishing how few, whether of primary or senior groups, really know how to do that. Be specific in your assignments. Don't assign work so difficult that it discourages your pupils, nor yet so easy that it is not worth their attention.

Ask them to read the Bible text which comes between one lesson and the next and be able to tell in class what happened or what was said. Ask them to draw outline maps which will be used in the next lesson hour. Have them find out from books (which you designate) about the place of the lesson. Copy or cut from this Guide stories or information and give such clippings to different pupils each week. In some classes if such material is sent through the mail the latter part of the week it will have assured attention. Give questions from among those found here in connection with each lesson: do not make the mistake of giving out too many of them, however, lest there be not time enough to take them up the week following. Never fail to call for assigned work: nothing discourages pupils more than to know that they may work in vain—as it seems to them—as the work may not be referred to again.

Keep watch of the lessons two weeks ahead, if possible, and assign literary allusions noted here and those which occur to your own mind. Two results will follow. Pupils will voluntarily begin bringing to class apropos bits of literature, music, or art; and they will begin to complain that the lesson time is too short. Then something else may follow. They may suggest having a fifteen minute period before the regular Sunday-school hour, or a monthly or fortnightly meeting of the class at some convenient time, or a bulletin board or sheet on which they make suggestions of things to do and reports upon things done. By the end of the First Quarter the activities of the class ought to be bursting either the spatial confines of your "corner," or the time confines of the lesson period.

In adult classes ask special pupils to come prepared with three minute talks upon some phase of the main topic or upon one of those suggested here for discussion. Expect each one to be so definitely responsible for his contribution that if he cannot prepare or cannot come he will call up another member and get him to take the subject. He should feel as fully obligated to fulfil such an assignment as to keep a business or social engagement.

4. The lesson should inspire the pupils with a purpose of action that will ripen into deeds. Consider what you have done for your pupils during the lessons of this past year. You can sum up your work under three heads: I. Instruction; II. Inspiration; III. Training. Your pupils have learned some facts, and acquired some opinions; they have felt some aspirations and formed some resolutions; and they have gained some desire for, and skill in obtaining, more knowledge, more inspiration, more training.

Consider which of these results is the most valuable. Information is readily forgotten, unless used. Opinions remain longer and are valuable if correct, and if often revised in the light of new knowledge, but they are dangerous if they degenerate into traditions or prejudices. Aspirations and resolutions are very

valuable if fulfilled, but they are downright vicious if they fade without finding an outlet in *action*.

"Giving instruction," by courtesy often called teaching, tends to become a setting forth of data, an elucidation thereof, a generalization, a formulation, and a rhetorical conclusion. A class so instructed listens, interestedly or perfunctorily as the case may be, then goes away and speedily forgets it all. The teacher's great effort should be: first, to incite in the pupils such mental activity as will cause them to apply the lesson in judging the events of their environment and their own actions; and second, to arouse such emotions as will tend to move the will and result in action.

If any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man who beholds his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. Dr. Rufus M. Jones aptly says that here in these words of the Apostle James is "a great piece of psychological insight, as fresh and modern as though it were written by his unapostolic namesake Professor James. It is a notorious fact that none of us can visualize our own faces from memory. We see ourselves often enough, but the image fades out at once and leaves only a vague blur. Just the same way goodness which is only thought about and not translated into motor effect—emotions over the love of God which never drive us into personal actions of love—quickly fade away and leave us as though they had not been, or rather, leave us weaker and worse for the fruitless evaporation."

"Good thoughts are no better than good dreams unless they be executed." When Mr. Roosevelt was police commissioner of New York City he read for the first time Jacob Riis's book, How the Other Half Lives. He did not put the book down and forget it. He went at his first opportunity to lower Manhattan, climbed the stairs in a modest house and knocked on a door. There was no response, for Mr. Riis was not at home. Taking out his card he wrote upon it, "Have read your book, and came to help."

5. The successful teacher will lead his pupils to meditate during the week on the problems raised in class. Luther Burbank, "The Plant Wizard," believes that while the greatest happiness in the world is to make others happy, the next greatest is to make them think. In one of his books Ruskin writes: "God has made man to take pleasure in the use of his eyes, wits, and body; and the foolish creature is continually trying to live without *looking* at anything, without *thinking* about anything, and without *doing* anything."

Do your pupils ask questions which show that their minds are at work? Do they answer questions without being individually called upon? Do you give thought to the kind of questions you ask them? Joseph Conrad, in Lord Jim, speaks of a play of questions being "as instructive as the tapping with a hammer upon an iron box to find out what's inside."

"To draw forth wise replies
Your questions must be wise."

A teacher who wished his pupils to acquire the art of accurate listening as well as quick thinking sometimes laid traps for them in the way of catch questions. In the two instances quoted below, the answers came with joyful promptness from the entire class, not a single voice being missed from the chorus:

"Whose hatchet never told a lie?"

"George Washington's!"

"Whom did the negro slaves of this country free?"

"Abraham Lincoln!"

According to the age and intelligence of your pupils you can discuss in class the lesson truth and ask them to bring next Sunday applications of that truth, or you can make the applications one day and hold them responsible for bringing in the reflections the next week. Don't continue giving tasks which experience shows your pupils cannot do.

As to the practical applications, the younger the pupils the more personal they should be. Pupils of twelve will seek to apply to their neighbors: your task is to get them to apply to themselves. Pupils of eighteen will be interested in collecting examples from history and fiction; your task is to induce self-application. Adults also will bring in historic and literary examples, according to their state of culture, but without much education they can make generalizations and applications to public affairs. In an adult class as a rule the teacher does

not need to press home personal applications, except in the case of his own confessions, which need not be too deep. "I made this mistake with my child, or my men, or my maid" will bring a score of similar small confessions from your pupils, and an aftermath—to themselves on their way home—of a much more vital kind. If it brings changed conduct on serious matters you may hear of it later—and you may not.

And by the way, let me suggest to teachers of adult classes to cultivate that somewhat rare but very valuable art of making the members think they have arrived at the conclusions reached in class largely unaided. You will find it brings large returns.

Our Lessons for the First Nine Months. Perhaps your pupils do not know that the lessons in our Improved Uniform Course are arranged in cycles so as to cover the narrative portions of the Bible consecutively, though not continuously. Our present eight year cycle began in 1918. One year we studied about the Patriarchs and Early Leaders of Israel, from Abraham to the Settlement in Canaan; the year following, the Early Leaders and Kings of Israel; and now we take up the Later Leaders and Prophets of Israel and Judah, from the Division of the Kingdom to the Close of the Old Testament. (Interspersed with these courses we have had the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles.) Tell your class about this program and arouse their interest in and their desire to master the latter portion of the Old Testament which we are about to study.

If the stories in this series do not grip your pupils it will surely be because there is something serious the matter with their presentation. For they are great stories. They are fascinatingly full of human interest, crowded with life and movement. To spoil them even as literature, would be a grievous sin. It was not by accident that Mendelssohn took Elijah as the subject of a great oratorio. Let us come to them with the joy of the story-teller and the seriousness of the historian.

There are only a very few lessons—such as those about Daniel—which are so familiar that special pains will have to be made in order to restore their luster, to make the obvious arresting. And these we can easily view as Frank H. Boreham views a mountain, and find them perennial sources of wonder and delight. Mountains, far from being emblems of immutability, he finds positively kaleidoscopic. "I never saw a mountain look just the same two days running," he says, "and fantastic changes overtake them as I view them from different points of the compass." And as for the rest of the lessons you yourselves, if I mistake not, will often say, "I had forgotten about this point," and even, perhaps, now and then, "I don't remember having read this before."

There is a truth very familiar and commonplace, that I would have you recall in connection with these Old Testament lessons. To make it more arresting, I will tell it in Dean Hodges's words, as he gives it in Christianity between Sundays:—

"We read about the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, and about groves of Baal and Ashtaroth at Samaria and Jezreel, and all that old life seems far away, and foreign, and obsolete, and altogether out of relation with the life we live today. But human nature does not greatly change. Names change, but the facts that lie beneath them continue. Languages, customs, skies change; the center of the world moves from one land to another; outwardly there is absolute revolution, everything is different; Dan and Bethel, Samaria and Jezreel, fall into ruins, and New York and Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Chicago, take their places; and Baal and Ashtaroth are dead. But men and women meet the same temptations still and fall into the same sins. The devil wears a different dress, that is about the only difference."

These lessons touch our modern life in compelling ways. As a sample of what we shall meet constantly in the course, let me quote these words of Professor William Phelps: "The famous story of Ahab and Naboth's vineyard reminds us of the towering insolence and uncontrolled greed of the former German Emperor, William II; and the answer of Naboth, who knew he was no match in power with the king, reminds us of the reply made to a certain request, by Belgium—'And Naboth said unto Ahab, the Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.'"

To rightly interpret these lessons one must have a background of knowledge of the life and history of the times. "He must enter into the spirit and genius of the Hebrew nation, know their aspirations, their political and economic prob-

lems, and understand their tragedies and sufferings. He must know the historical and social setting of the Jewish people, the nations and civilizations that surrounded them, and the customs, mode of life, and trend of thought of contemporaneous peoples. Not all of these things can be learned from the Bible itself. One must make use of the various helps and commentaries available. Ancient literature should be placed under tribute, and every means employed to gain a working knowledge of the social medium out of which the Christian religion developed." The helps in this book—the historical and geographical background, the explanatory notes, orientalisms—are all intended to aid you in making these Old Testament lessons clear and vivid.

Recall the teachers of history under whom you have studied. Which were the best, those who were chiefly concerned in drilling you upon dates and lists and facts, or those who made you see the forces that led to the great events? The exact order of the Kings of Israel and of the Kings of Judah is a trivial matter: you might teach this and cause your pupils to assimilate much Biblical information, and yet not be teaching religion. A living portraiture of the great prophets and the few great kings you will seek to give, but most of all you will endeavor to inspire your pupils with a sense of the significance of God's dealings with his people, to bring them into the wonderful atmosphere of intense belief in a personal God which lies about it all.

One great principle runs through these lessons: righteousness exalts a nation, sin is nationally destructive. The course of events in Israel and Judah and the warnings given by the prophets are replete with instruction for our own nation. The wages of sin is death—the inevitableness of the penalty for evildoing is upon us throughout the first two Quarters. God is patient, and the penalty is stayed for a time, but we know that it is coming as certainly as the night follows the day, alike to individuals and nations.

The boy who was asked, "What does the reign of King Charles I teach us?" and who replied, "Not to lose our heads in moments of excitement," may have been merely a boy who liked to show off his smartness, but it may also have been true that the teaching of the history had not left in his mind any other lesson which he could offer. Here in our course are moral and spiritual lessons "writ large" for the youngest to understand and the oldest and wisest to ponder: let us not miss them.

Our Lessons for the Last Quarter. Here in the last quarter we begin a six months' course with the Gospel of Luke. Have you ever read this Gospel through at a sitting? Do this when this Quarter comes round. Make notes wherein Luke differs from Matthew, the Gospel with which you are probably more familiar. Review and renew your acquaintance with the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ.

"Sometimes, when I read a Gospel through at a sitting," Chaplain Thomas Tiplady confesses in Social Christianity in the New Era, "I wonder by what right I call myself a Christian. Modern conventional Christianity seems to be scarcely the same thing as the Christianity of Christ. In his ode, 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,' Wordsworth describes how the light which was about him in youth gradually faded as he drew near to manhood. Shades of the prison-house began to close upon the growing boy. Only by continually returning to the pure light of the Gospels can the Church, as it grows older, avoid experiencing a similar loss of light. There is danger lest the vision splendid should

'die away,
And fade into the light of common day.'

"There is one unchanging test of a Christian, and it is well expressed by Whittier: 'We test our lives by Thine.'"

"The centuries, since Christ to earthland came
Have been aflame
With his fair fame.

The nations that have fallen in decay
In sad tones say,
'His is the Way.'

And in this age of turpitude and blight,
Out from the night
Shines clear his Light." (Curtis Clark.)

The ideal story for all classes is the familiar story of the life and message of Jesus the Christ retold with a new, because individual, accent. You teachers are the interpreters of this life and message. That was a beautiful epitaph given a famous astronomer—"He brought the stars near to us." What a service! And how infinitely greater is the service of the teacher who brings the Christ near to his pupils!

THE BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES

The Titles. First and Second Kings are thus called because they cover that part of Israel's history in which the kings reigned. They mention all the kings of Israel save Saul, the first king.

In the Hebrew the two books of Chronicles are called "The Words of the Day," that is, "The Journal." Jerome first gave them the name of Chronicles, in his Latin Translation. The Septuagint (Greek) Version calls them "The Things Omitted": they contain information omitted in Samuel and Kings in regard to the worship at Jerusalem, as well as a repetition, often with additional facts and observations, of portions of those books. The Syrian title is "The Book of the Transactions of the Kings of Judah": after the Disruption the record of Judah only is given.

The Writers. The Books themselves give us no information in regard to the writers, although they mention an official recorder, or chronicler. The books of Kings and Chronicles emphasize the fact that they are compilations by frequently referring to annals which have not come down to us. "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" is mentioned seventeen times, and "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" is mentioned fifteen times. A "Book of the Acts of Solomon" is referred to in 1 K. 11.41; "the history of Jehu, the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the Kings of Israel" is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 20.34. These and yet other records mentioned as sources of information, or redactions from them, were the "original sources" used by the writers of our books of Kings and Chronicles. It is natural to suppose that Lives or Biographies of Elijah and Elisha furnished information in regard to these prophets, for "histories of Shemaiah, the Prophet, and of Iddo, the Seer" are referred to in Second Chronicles 12.15.

The Purpose of the Writers. Kings and Chronicles are historical books, but they are wholly unlike modern historical narratives, being history written from a religious point of view, ecclesiastical history rather than political history. The Jews placed them in the section of the Old Testament known as "The Prophets," thereby indicating that their history is written from the prophetic standpoint, the ideas and principles and illustrations, rather than the facts, being of the greatest importance. A comparison of the word or two in Kings about the siege of Samaria and the verse or two about the fall of Jerusalem with Herodotus's account of the Battle of Salamis and Livy's account of the Battle of Cannæ has well shown the writers' lack of interest in the details of political history.

In these books we have what Browning calls "the spiritual life around the earthly life." The writers have recorded events in the life of the nation and of individuals that show the growth and the decay of the Hebrew kingdom, and have interpreted these events, revealing God's controlling hand through them all. There are two ways of writing history: "You can either leave God out," as Dr. Alexander Maclaren tells us, "or you can trace all things to him. The former way calls itself 'scientific' and 'positive.' The latter is the Bible way. Perhaps, if modern history were written on the same principle as the books of Kings, the Divine hand would be as plainly visible—only it requires an inspired historian to do it."

The historians looked at the kings and their ways from the high standpoint of whether the acts were pleasing or displeasing to God. With monotonous regularity we are told of each king of the Northern Kingdom, from Jeroboam to Hoshea, that "he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord," and even of some of the good kings of the Southern Kingdom—Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham—it is added that "nevertheless the high places were not removed."

Judgment is pronounced upon each king, not as to his ability or statesmanship, but as to his relation to God, and the space given to each reign does not depend upon its importance politically but upon whether it promoted or retarded the right worship of the Lord. Jeroboam II, who had a long, prosperous reign, is dismissed in two or three verses, while Ahab is dealt with at considerable length because in his reign occurred the great struggle aaginst Baalism.

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

The Date. It is believed that First Kings was written in Judah before the Exile, perhaps about 600 B. C.

The Contents. The close connection of the four Books of Samuel and Kings is shown by the title given them in the Septuagint Version of "The First, Second, Third and Fourth Books of the Kingdom." The First Book of Kings continues the history where the Second Book of Samuel leaves it. The title of the Syriac Version reads: "Here follows the Book of the kings who flourished among this ancient people; and in it is also exhibited the history of the prophets who flourished in their time."

The First Book of Kings begins with David in his feeble old age, records the splendor of Solomon's reign, and continues with the history of the two kingdoms which arose at his death until Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah and Ahaziah's reign over Israel. Its chief heroes are Solomon and Elijah.

The Outline.

I. The Last Days of David and the Reign of Solomon. 1 K. 1.1 to 11.43.
II. The History of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel from the Disruption to the Reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah. 12.1 to 22.53.
   1. Rehoboam in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel. 12.1 to 14.31.
   2. Abijam and Asa in Judah. 15.1-24.
   3. Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri in Israel. 15.25 to 16.28.
   4. Ahab's Reign in Israel. 16.29 to 22.40.
      a. The Prophet Elijah at Cherith, Zarephath, Mount Carmel, and Horeb. 17.1 to 19.21.
      b. Defeat of Benhadad. 20.
      c. Ahab, Jezebel, Naboth, and Elijah. 21.
   5. Jehoshaphat's Reign in Judah and Ahaziah's Reign in Israel. 22.41.53.

As Literature. The brief, formal summaries of the kings of Israel and Judah in the latter part of the book (which our lessons cover)—good kings and bad kings, kings who worshipped Jehovah and kings who thought Jehovah and the Baalim might be worshipped side by side—are monotonously given, but the narratives from the life of Elijah, the stern prophet who appears unexpectedly at critical moments, are graphic and stirring, told with fine dramatic power.

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

The Date. We must keep in mind the fact that Second Kings is a compilation, and that its final completion could not be earlier than the last date mentioned. The last verses of the book record the release of Jehoiachin from prison in 561 B. C., and of an allowance made him "all his life," hence the date must have been after his death, or about 550 B. C.

The Contents. Second Kings begins with the deaths of king Ahaziah and the prophet Elijah and continues the history of both kingdoms till the Northern was conquered by Assyria and the Southern by Babylon, a period of nearly three hundred years. Through it all we see the doom impending because of sins within and foes without, until inhabitants of each kingdom are carried away captive and the land is left desolate.

The Outline.

I. The History of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah until the Fall of Samaria. 2 K. 1 to 17.
  1. Ahaziah in Israel. 2 K. 1.
  2. The Prophet Elisha. 2 K. 2.1 to 8.15; 13.14-21.
  3. Jehoram and Ahaziah in Judah. 2 K. 8.16-29.
  4. Jehu in Israel. 2 K. 9 and 10.
  5. Athaliah and Jehoash in Judah. 2 K. 11 and 12.
  6. Jehoahaz and Jehoash in Israel. 2 K. 13.1-13.
     a. Wars with Moab and Syria. 2 K. 13.22-25.
  7. Amaziah and Azariah in Judah. 2 K. 14.1-22; 15.1-7.
  8. Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah in Israel. 2 K. 14.23-29; 15.8-31.
     a. Assyrian Invasion under Tiglath-Pileser. 2 K. 15.29.
  9. Jotham and Ahaz in Judea. 2 K. 15.32 to 16.20.
     a. Saved from Syria through Allegiance to Tiglath Pileser of Assyria. 2 K. 15.5-18.
  10. Israel Conquered by Assyria in Hoshea's Reign and Carried into Captivity. 2 K. 17.1-41.
     a. Foreigners brought into Samaria. 2 K. 17.24-41.

II. The History of the Kingdom of Judah from the Fall of the Kingdom of Israel until the Babylonian Exile. 2 K. 18.1 to 25.37.
  1. Hezekiah's Reign. 2 K. 18 to 20.
     a. Invasion of Sennacherib. 2 K. 18.13-37.
     b. Isaiah's Prophecy of Deliverance. 2 K. 19.20-34.
  2. Manasseh's and Amon's Reigns. 2 K. 21.1-26.
  3. Josiah's Reign. 2 K. 22.1 to 23.30.
  4. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim's Reigns. 2 K. 23.31 to 24.6.
     a. Jehoahaz Deposed by Pharaoh of Egypt. 2 K. 23.33.
     b. Jehoiakim Subject to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. 2 K. 24.1-5.
  5. Jehoiachin's Reign. 2 K. 24.6-9.
     a. The Captivity Begins. 2 K. 24.10-16.
  6. Zedekiah's Reign. 2 K. 24.17-19.
  7. Jerusalem Captured and Judah Carried into Exile in Babylon. 2 K. 25.
     a. The City Laid Waste and Temple Destroyed. 2 K. 25.1-21.
     b. Gedaliah made Governor of Judah. 2 K. 25.22-26.
     c. Jehoiachin Kindly Treated by Evil-Merodach. 2 K. 25.27-30.

As Literature. There is a monotonous uniformity about the accounts of the kings; as a rule they are as lifeless as some extracts from modern official documents. Most of them read like bare summaries of more expanded writings. The "framework" of each record is as follows:

I. Date of the king's accession according to the year of the contemporary king of the other kingdom; his age at the time; the duration of his reign; the name of his mother.

II. An account of his deeds and pronouncement of judgment thereon. Sometimes parts I and III are all that are given, the writer not deeming it necessary to give the facts on which he bases his praise or condemnation.

III. A reference to the source of some of the writer's information; a notice of the king's death and burial; the name of his successor.

"The historian has been blamed for the perpetual gloom which enwraps his narrative," says Canon Farrar, "but surely the criticism is unjust. He did not invent his story. The picture is, after all, far less gloomy than that presented in many a great historic record. Consider the features of such an age as that recorded by Tacitus, with the 'Iliad of woes' of which he was the annalist, the long ages of darkness in the fifth and following centuries; of the Northmen; the condition of England in the middle of the fourteenth century when the Black Death swept away half of her population; the extreme misery of the masses after the Thirty Years' War; or the desolating horrors of the wars of Napoleon which filled Germany with homeless and starving orphans. The annals of the Hebrew monarchy are less grim than these."

The contrast between the accounts of the lives of the kings and those of the prophets is most striking. Elijah and Elisha loom large (1 K. 17 to 2 K. 8, with a few exceptions), their stories occupy nearly a third of the books. Here

we are in another atmosphere. The narratives are rich in picturesque and vivid detail, and are told with splendid dramatic power.

Lesson for Today. The one main lesson which the narrative of the Books of Kings is meant to teach, Canon Farrar points out, is absolute faith and trust in God as an anchor which holds amid the wildest storms of ruin and of apparently final failure. It shows us that duty is the reward of duty, and that there can be no happiness save for those who have learned that duty and blessedness are one.

THE SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES

The Date. The writing is generally assigned to 300 B.C., when it was necessary to inform those who had returned from Captivity of the former glory of the temple and of their need of it and its worship.

The Contents. Second Chronicles furnishes a condensed history of events in Judah and an account of the worship of the Israelites from the accession of Solomon to the captivity of Judah. The decree of Cyrus permitting the rebuilding of the temple is added. Upon the division of the Kingdom, Second Chronicles omits entirely the history of Northern Israel, save for an occasional bare reference, given incidentally, because of its connection with the Kingdom of Judah. In 2 Ch. 25.7 we are told that "Jehovah is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim": this, seemingly, is the belief of the Chronicler throughout his record.

While the writers of Kings and Chronicles alike give a succession of narratives, not for the sake of the history, but for the sake of their religious import, and are alike interested in the correct worship of Jehovah in the temple at Jerusalem, yet for the Chronicler as not for the writer of Kings all ritual interests are of paramount importance. The Chronicler's interest lies primarily in the temple with its worship, its priests, Levites and singers; and secondarily he is intent upon pointing the moral, in declaring that sin is followed by punishment and that goodness is rewarded.

The Outline.

I. Solomon's Reign. 2 Ch. 1 to 9.
II. The Kings of Judah from the Disruption till the Return from Captivity. 2 Ch. 10 to 36.
   1. Revolt of the Ten Tribes under Jeroboam. 2 Ch. 10.1 to 11.4.
   2. Degeneracy under Rehoboam and Abijah. 2 Ch. 11.5 to 13.22.
   3. Reforms under Asa and Jehoshaphat. 2 Ch. 14 to 20.
   4. Degeneracy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah. 2 Ch. 21 to 23.
   5. Reform under Joash. 2 Ch. 24.
   6. Degeneracy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz. 2 Ch. 25 to 28.
   7. Reform under Hezekiah. 2 Ch. 29 to 32.
   8. Degeneracy under Manasseh and Amon. 2 Ch. 33.
   9. Reform under Josiah. 2 Ch. 34 to 35.
   10. Degeneracy under Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. 2 Ch. 36.1-16.
   11. Captivity. 2 Ch. 36.1-23.

Lessons for Today. Professor Edward L. Curtis, in his commentary, gives this just estimate of the value of this book: "The religious value of Chronicles lies in the emphasis given to the institutional forms of religion. Forms, ceremonies, institutions of one sort or another, are necessary for the maintenance of religious life. However narrow the Chronicler's teachings may be considered, and however artificial their products, without the shell of Judaistic legalism and ecclesiasticism it is difficult to see how the precious truths of Divine revelation in Hebrew prophecy could have been preserved. Otherwise, amid encroaching forces of the Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations they would have been dissipated, and no place would have been prepared for the appearance of Christ and the growth of Christianity."

Yet the obvious sacerdotalism, prominent as it is, does not obscure the greatest thoughts of the book, the belief in a righteous God, "Jehovah the Good," and the deep concern for fidelity to him. In the beautiful prayer uttered by Hezekiah we see this triumph over ritualism: "The good Jehovah pardon everyone that

setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." And it is a God who is omnipotent, who stirs up the heart of Pul and of Tiglath-Pileser, kings of Assyria, as well as the hearts of the children of Israel; who is omniscient—2 Ch. 16.9; 1 Ch. 28.9; he is also merciful—2 Ch. 30.9.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

The Titles. In the Hebrew canon and in the Talmud Ezra and Nehemiah, like First and Second Kings, and First and Second Chronicles, form a single book. It was Origen (third century of our era) who first divided the volume into two parts, calling them first and second Esdras, and it was Jerome (fifth century) who first gave the name of Nehemiah to the second part.

The Writers. The leading actors in the history are Ezra and Nehemiah, and the writings of each are preserved in the "I sections" of the books (those in which the narrative is told in the first person). It would have been possible for Ezra to write the entire book that bears his name, depending for the earlier history with which he was not connected, which occurred some sixty years before he came to Jerusalem, upon a narrative written by a contemporary of Jerubbabel. But it would not have been possible for Nehemiah to write all of the Book of Nehemiah, for there are certain statements which could only have been written much later than Nehemiah's day. In Neh. 12.11,22, Jaddua is mentioned, who was a high priest in the time of Alexander the Great, a century later than Nehemiah. "Darius the Persian" is mentioned in Neh. 12.22; had not the Persian Empire passed away at that writing, Nehemiah would naturally have said, "the king," or "king Darius." And in Neh. 12.26,47, there is a looking back to "the days of Nehemiah."

The books include the authentic memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah together with historical summaries written, not in Hebrew like the rest of the books, but in Aramaic, and "state documents," all put together, it is believed by scholars, by "the Chronicler," the one who edited the Books of Chronicles.

The last two verses of Second Chronicles and the first two verses of Ezra are the same. Noticeable, too, are the similarity of phrases in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, the similar regard for the Law, the interest in the details of Temple worship, and the fondness for long genealogical lists.

The Date. Ezra the priest and scribe went from Babylon to Judea in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B. C. 458, and his memoirs were probably written a year or so later. Since Nehemiah made his second visit to Jerusalem in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, 432 B. C., his memoirs are assigned to about 430 B. C. The entire books as we now have them, if edited by one writer, must be assigned to a century later.

The Contents. The history of the Books of Kings and Chronicles practically closes with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the laying waste of the city and the destruction of the temple and city walls, and the deportation to Babylonia of the best part of its inhabitants. Fifty years pass, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah take up the history of the Jews at the first return to Jerusalem of exiles from Babylonia in the reign of Cyrus, 536 B. C., and continue it through the first hundred years of Persian domination, down to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 432 B. C.

There is a gap of sixty years between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra, and another of twelve or thirteen years between Ezra and Nehemiah, and the regular sequence of events is not always followed. In part the two books cover the same ground, and together they furnish a record of the re-founding of the nation, rebuilding of the temple and of the city walls, the re-establishing of the temple worship and the instituting of reforms in Jerusalem during these years under Persian rule. Ezra is, in brief, the Book of the Temple-building, while Nehemiah is the Book of the Wall-building and of the Reading of the Law.

The Outline of Ezra.

I. The Mission of Zerubbabel. 1 to 6.
   1. The Edict of Cyrus. 1.
   2. List of Returning Exiles. 2.

3. Sacrificial Worship Resumed and Building of the Temple Begun. 3.
4. Opposition of Adversaries, Cessation of Work. 4.
5. Building Resumed and Completed, and Temple Dedicated. 5 to 6.

II. The Mission of Ezra. 7 to 10.
1. Letter of Artaxerxes, and Journey of Ezra and List of Returning Exiles. 7 to 8.
2. Ezra's Reforms. 9 to 10.

The Book of Ezra as Literature. Ezra is a dignified, somewhat prosaic, unvarnished tale, wholly lacking in stirring incidents, which rises to eloquence only in the prayer of Ezra (9.6-15). Ezra appears as an energetic, intensely patriotic and deeply religious, but rather formal ecclesiastic.

Lessons for Today from Ezra. The historical interest in both these books is great, for they are our only source of information concerning the period they cover. Ezra's spirit of intense devotion to God, zealous patriotism and uncompromising loyalty to principle, furnish lessons much needed in our own times.

The Outline of Nehemiah.

I. The mission of Nehemiah. 1 to 7.
1. His Grief over Jerusalem and his Prayer. 1.
2. Artaxerxes's Permission, Nehemiah's Arrival in Jerusalem and Midnight Ride about the Ruined Walls. 2.
3. Details of the Building of the Wall. 3.
4. Ridicule and Opposition of Enemies. 4.
5. Complaints about Usury Settled. 5.
6. The Walls Finished despite Enemies' Plots. 6.
7. List of those who Returned. 7.

II. The Reading of the Law and its Effects. 8 to 10.
1. Reading of the Law by Ezra; Feast of Tabernacles Observed. 8.
2. Prayer of the Levites. 9.
3. Covenant of the People. 10.

III. The Settlement of the Cities. 11 to 13.
1. Lists of the People. 11.1 to 12.26.
2. Dedication of the Wall and Temple Ordinances. 12.27 to 13.3.
3. Various Reforms. 13.4-31.

The Book of Nehemiah as Literature. Nehemiah is characterized by a directness and vigor that are captivating. The scene of the cupbearer before the king and that of the solitary midnight ride around the ruined walls of Jerusalem, are especially vividly portrayed. The memoirs have many interesting biographical touches, little notes thrown in which tell of Nehemiah's own feelings and private actions, as in the second chapter, where he observes, "Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence," and, "Then I was sore afraid," and yet again, "So I prayed to the God of heaven,"—three such little observations in the course of four verses. Characteristic of the book are the ejaculatory prayers—flashes of thought—introduced parenthetically into the narrative.

Lessons for Today from Nehemiah. In Nehemiah the man we have a type of what the present day Christian should be. He was a strong man, self-reliant and yet humbly and trustfully dependent on God, a devout man of prayer and a daring man of action, keen, cautious, resourceful, energetic, persistent. He had a genius for organization, and was a born leader of men, and all his practical qualities were consecrated to noble endeavor. The book is a lesson upon practical piety: "No portion of the Bible gives more valuable suggestions for the wise business conduct of church affairs."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Writer. Luke was a Gentile (or a proselyte), one of the first members of the church at Antioch, Syria, and according to Eusebius and Jerome, a native of that city. He was a man of scholarship and culture, a fellow-worker of Paul, the "beloved physician" as Paul calls him in Col. 4.14. Luke was also the author of The Acts, and from his use in that book of the pronouns "we"

and "they" in his accounts of Paul's journeys, we naturally infer that part of the time he was one of the company. Tradition says that Luke died in Greece, and that his remains were brought to Constantinople by Constantine.

For Whom Written. In his preface Luke tells us that he had a "most excellent" friend, Theophilus by name, to whom he would give knowledge of Jesus's life and words that Theophilus might have a firm basis for the faith that was in him, and for this friend he wrote his Gospel. For this same friend he continued his writing, giving in the book we call The Acts an account of what Jesus began both to do and to teach through his disciples; his Gospel is, therefore, "The first volume of a great narrative which traces the victorious advance of Christianity from Galilee to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to Rome." So Robertson of Brighton, suggests Dr. Alexander MacColl, wrote out his sermons after they had been preached for the sake of a single friend whom he thought they might help, and that labor of love done for a friend has been used of God to mould the religious thinking of the world as have no other English sermons for a century.

It was, however, in accordance with the Greek custom to dedicate a book to a friend, or to some wealthy patron who would provide for the expense of having copies made by hand, and while Luke wrote primarily for Theophilus it is evident that he had all Greek Christians in mind.

According to Jerome, Luke wrote his Gospel in Greece, and according to the title of the Syriac Version it was published and preached in Alexandria. It was written later than Mark's Gospel, since it evidently made use of that record, and earlier than The Acts, for in the preface to that book it is referred to as the "former treatise." Most scholars give it the same date as Matthew's Gospel.

Its Source. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order," explains Luke in his introduction to his Gospel. Naturally we infer that he had for information the versions of the Gospels already written, especially that of Mark, and also oral tradition and the memory of his talks with the apostles. Many conjecture that the birth narratives were told him by Mary. Nearly ten chapters (9.51 to 19.28) are peculiar to his Gospel, and for them he must have had a special source. Irenæus affirms that "Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book this Gospel he (Paul) used to preach," and it is easy for one who looks for them to find traces of Paul's influence.

Its Aim. The keynote of this Gospel is 19.10: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke's special purpose was to prove to his own countrymen, the Greeks, that Jesus is the Friend wide in his sympathies, the Savior, not only of the Jews, but of the whole world. The universality of his Gospel is shown by the tracing of the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam; by the prominence given to Jesus's work for the poor and the outcast; by accounts not found in the other Gospels of Jesus's first discourse at Nazareth, in which he referred to God's mercy shown to a Gentile widow and a Gentile leper; of the parable of the Good Samaritan, which shows a Samaritan in better light than the Jews; of the call of Zacchæus, thought to have been a Gentile publican; of the mission of the Seventy to the Gentiles. We may well call it the Gospel of Tenderness and World-wide Love, of Joy and Thanksgiving.

"As we ourselves are pagan Christians," Dr. Frederic Godet reminds us, "we may call the Gospel of Luke more particularly our Gospel; it is this which explains the peculiar sympathy that Christians feel in general for this writing. If it is important for us to know Jesus as the King-Messiah promised by the prophets, as the sovereign of the divine kingdom, as the actual and future Lord of the heaven and earth, we should study, above all others, the Gospel of Matthew. If we wish to admire in him the Prophet powerful in works and words, the divine Hero whose every step is a victory, every word a ray of eternal light, in one word, the Son of God, who has traversed human life like a sublime apparition, let us especially open the Gospel of Mark. If we wish to contemplate in him the Physician sent from God to heal sick humanity, the compassionate and merciful Son of man, the Savior of sinners and even of the greatest of sinners, let us read the Gospel of Luke."

Its Contents. The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the New Testa-

ment, being slightly longer than his second work, The Acts. It is two-thirds longer than Mark and one-tenth longer than Matthew.

This is the Gospel of the Infancy and Youth of Jesus. Luke is called the first Christian hymnologist, for he alone gives the five great hymns: the Ave Maria, or the Angel's Salutation to the Virgin Mary, 1.28-33; the Magnificat, or Song of Mary, 1.46-55; the Benedictus, or Song of Zacharias, 1.68-79; the Gloria in Excelsis, or Song of the Angels, 2.14; and the Nunc Dimittis, or Song of Simeon, 2.29-32.

In Luke alone are found the accounts of the forerunner's birth, the presentation in the temple, the adoration of the shepherds, and the visit of the twelve-year-old Lad to the temple.

Luke is the only Evangelist who records all of the seven greatest events in the life of Jesus: his birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, death, resurrection, ascension.

About half of the entire Gospel is not given by the other Evangelists. To Luke we are indebted for the parables of the Two Debtors, the Good Samaritan, the Friend at Midnight, the Rich Fool, the Barren Fig Tree, the Builder of the Tower, the King Going to War, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Unprofitable Servant, the Importunate Widow, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Pounds (which resembles the Talents); and for the miracles of the draught of fishes, raising of the widow of Nain's son, cure of the woman with a spirit of infirmity, cure of the man with the dropsy, the healing of the ten lepers, the restoration of Malchus's ear; events such as the visit to the house of Martha and Mary, the sending out of the seventy disciples, the sojourn at the home of Zacchæus, etc., and for the records of our Lord's prayers at his baptism, after the cleansing of the leper, before the call of the twelve, at the transfiguration, and on the cross for his enemies.

Its Arrangement and Outline. "It seemed good to me to write unto thee in order," affirms Luke in his introduction. In accordance with his plan of giving a complete and orderly picture of Jesus's life, he dates events by references to contemporary happenings, and records the circumstances in which the words of Jesus were spoken. Yet in his account of the Perean ministry, order and circumstances are somewhat vague.

I. Introduction, or Preface. 1.1-4.
II. Infancy and Youth of Jesus. 1.5 to 2.52.
III. Preparation for the Public Ministry. 3.1 to 4.13.
IV. Galilean Ministry. 4.14 to 9.50.
V. The Later Ministry, especially in Perea. 9.51 to 19.28.
VI. Last Visit to Jerusalem and Passion Week. 19.29 to 23.56.
VII. The Resurrection and Ascension. 24.

As Literature. Luke himself claims for his work fulness, order, accuracy, careful research. He is the trained historian, who gives philosophical comments upon the reasons for things; the bright, clever Greek, who writes animatedly and picturesquely. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent points out that his construction is rhythmical and his vocabulary well selected and more copious than that of the other Evangelists, containing over seven hundred words which occur nowhere else in the New Testament; and less Hebraic in style than the others except in the first two chapters, which he probably derived from Aramaic sources.

"The style of this Gospel is more polished than the others, and savors of secular eloquence," declared St. Jerome. "From the purely literary and humanitarian standpoint, it is the most beautiful book ever written," affirmed Renan.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Saul ..... 1050 B. C.
David ..... 1010 B. C.
Solomon ..... 969 B. C.

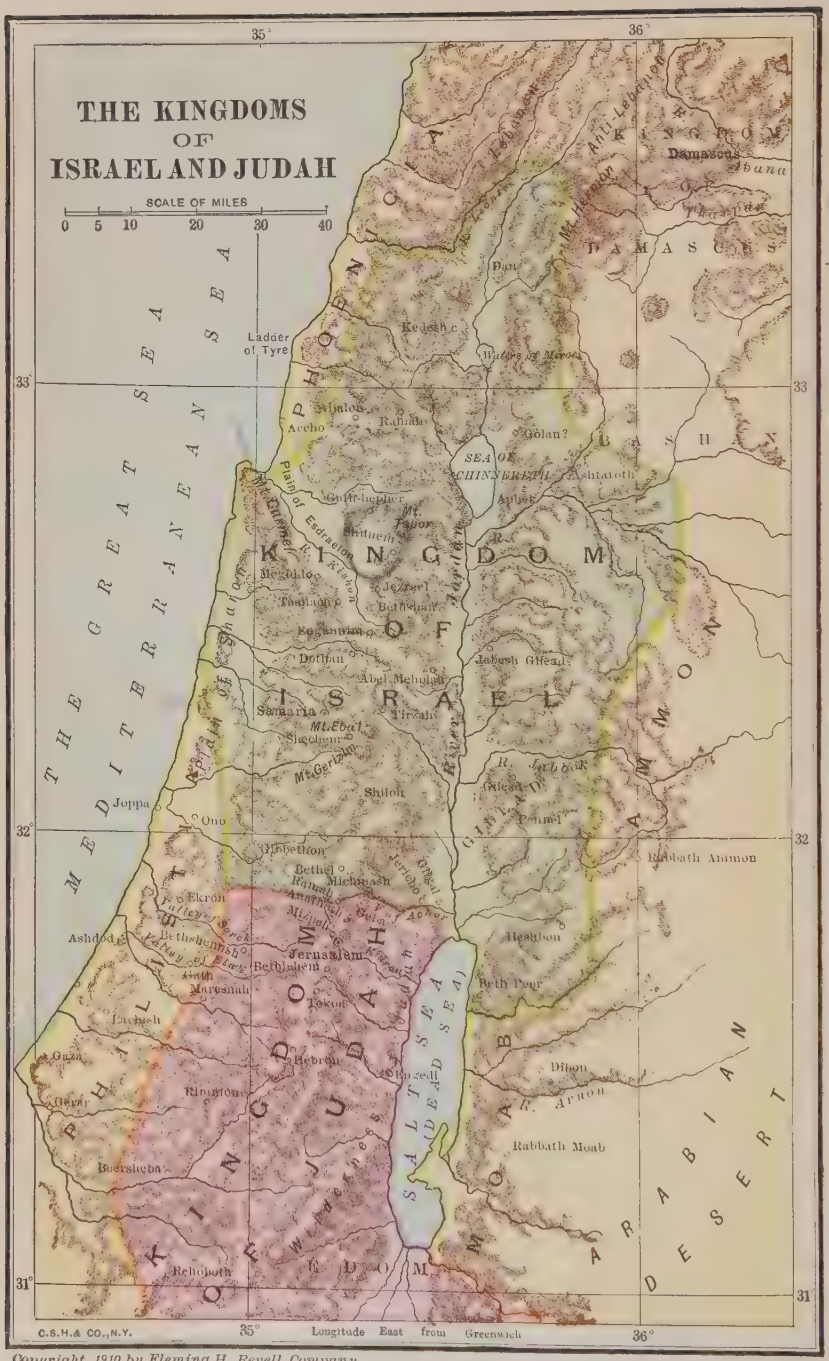
THE KINGS OF JUDAH

The House of David .... 937-586 B. C.
Rehoboam 937-920
Abijam 920-917
Asa 917-876
Jehoshaphat 876-851
Jehoram 851-843
Ahaziah 843-842
Athaliah (usurper) .. 842-836
Joash 836-796
Amaziah 796-782
Uzziah 782-740
Jotham 740-735
(Co-regent 751-740)
Ahaz 735-715
Hezekiah 715-686
Manasseh 686-641
Ammon 641-639
Josiah 639-608
Jehoahaz 608
Jehoiakim 608-597
Jehoiachin 597
First Group of Exiles Taken to Babylon 597
Zedekiah 597-586
Fall of Jerusalem: Second Group of Exiles Taken to Babylon 586

Note. Old Testament dates cannot be given with exactness. Many of the dates in this list are in dispute.

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

The House of Jeroboam . 937-914 B. C.
Jeroboam 937-915
Nadab 915-914
The House of Baasha ... 914-889
Baasha 914-890
Elah 890-889
The House of Zimri .... 889 (7 days)
The House of Omri 889-842
Omri 889-875
Ahab 875-853
Ahaziah 853-852
Jehoram 852-842
The House of Jehu 842-743
Jehu 842-814
Jehoahaz 814-797
Jehoash 797-782
Jeroboam II 782-743
Zechariah 743
The House of Shallum.. 743 (1 mo.)
The House of Menahem.. 742-736
Menahem 742-736
Pekahiah ..... 736 (2 mos.)
The House of Pekah 736-734
The House of Hoshea .. 734-721
Fall of Samaria; People of Israel Taken into Captivity by the Assyrians 721



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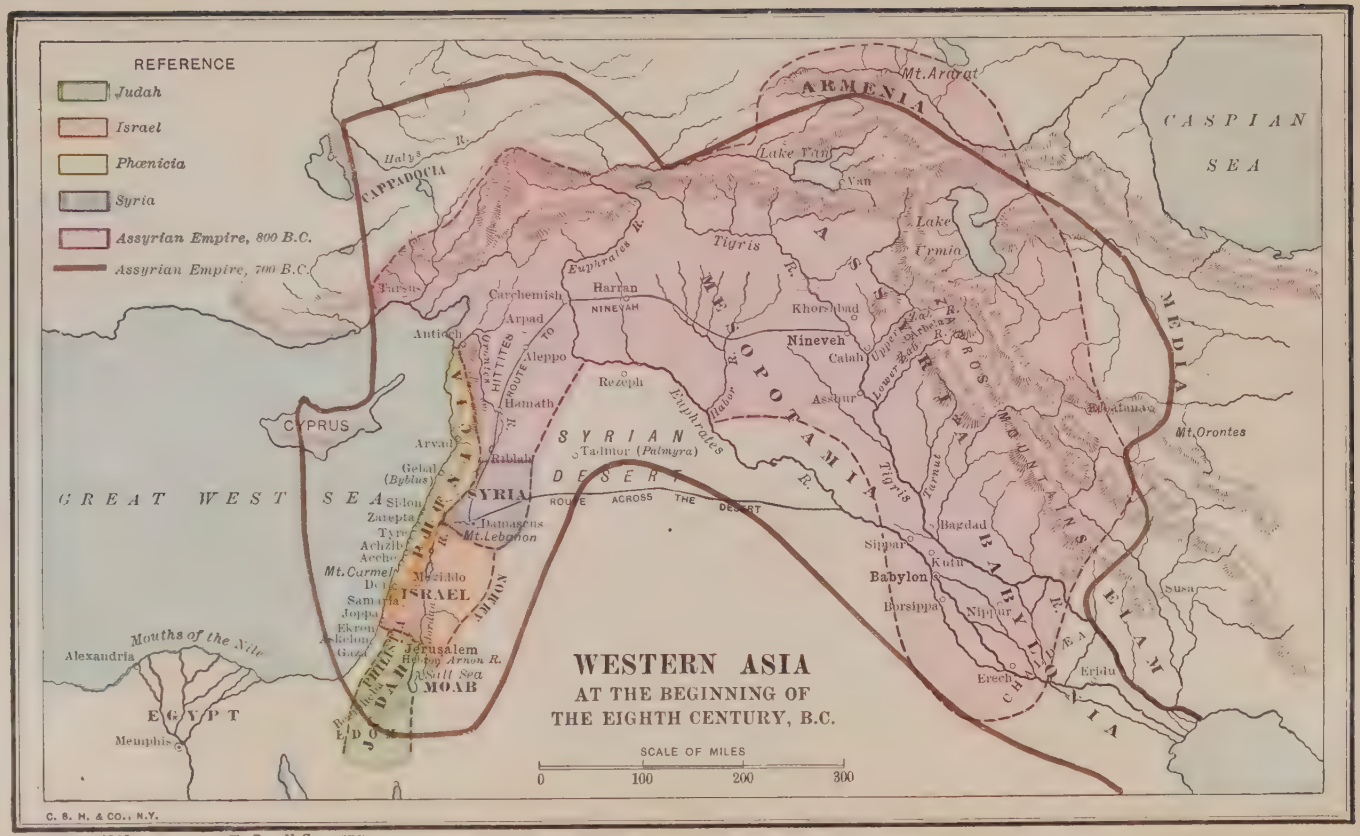

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RUINS ON THE SITE OF ANCIENT SAMARIA, THE LATER CAPITAL OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

FIRST QUARTER

LATER LEADERS AND PROPHETS OF ISRAEL (NORTHERN KINGDOM)

LESSON I—JANUARY 1

THE REVOLT OF JEROBOAM

Golden Text

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them. Exodus 20.4,5

LESSON 1 Kings 12.1 to 13.6 DEVOTIONAL READING 2 Samuel 23.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL 1 Kings 11.26-43; 13.7 to 14.20; 2 Chronicles 12 and 13; Isaiah 44.9-20

1 KINGS 12.12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, 14 and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see

to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. 17 But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; for the people went *to worship* before the one, even unto Dan.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. DANGER SIGNALS, verses 1-4. We study today an event in the history of Israel the most fateful in consequence since the Exodus—the disruption of the Kingdom. *All Israel* had gathered at Shechem to make Rehoboam king. Jeroboam had hastily returned from Egypt (see the Historical Background) in time for this assembly. "His return made clear the temper of the people, as the stormy petrel proclaims the coming storm. That Jeroboam had been chosen as spokesman was a distinct challenge to the throne. It was more. It was a sign of organized opposition." *Make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee,* was the condition on which the northern tribes offered to pledge their loyalty to the new king. The *yoke* was an emblem of servitude (see Light from Oriental Life). Solomon had heavily taxed the people and had required of them forced labor. Recall Samuel's prophecy when the people demanded a king, 1 S. 8.10-18, and read 1 K. 4.7,22-26; 5.11-18, to see how Solomon's great buildings and extravagant court must have impoverished the people.

"An engine driver runs past the red light at his own risk. Danger-signals are a clear call to caution. The explanation of frequent disaster in human life is the failure to note them. Rehoboam showed some signs of awakening common sense when he asked for three days to consider his answer and used the time to take counsel. The word spoken in haste in a complicated situation is the word to be regretted. How many wars between nations and between classes would have been avoided had there been delay!"

II. GOOD AND EVIL COUNSELS, verses 5-11. Rehoboam consulted first *the old men;* his father's counselors. They gave him sound advice. He could be the people's master if he would *serve them, and speak good words to them.* Next he consulted *the young men that were grown up with him,* and their counsel was evil. Boastful, tyrannical and insolent were the words they put into his mouth: *My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.* The whole expression is figurative, and voices the king's intention of being a far worse despot than his father. The word *scorpions* is supposed to refer to a lash used in scourging which had metal points. "Such a scourge might be called a 'scorpion' just as as one that tears, like a cat's claws, is called a 'cat' " (Wood). The Romans are said to have given the same name to an instrument of flagellation.

III. THE KING'S INFAMOUS ANSWER, verses 12-14. "The poor useth entreaties, but the rich answereth roughly" (Prov. 18.23), was exemplified at Shechem. When the people returned *the third day the king answered the people roughly,* speaking the words which the young men counseled. "Rehoboam had grown up in the atmosphere of autocracy. He had known luxury, slaves, and self-indulgence. A man is governed by his tastes as well as by his convictions. If he is trained in self-indulgence, he will often desire the life which gives him the privilege of self-indulgence. Rehoboam came out of the king's court with a desire to oppress, and he disrupted a nation" (Arthur E. Holt).

IV. THE CONTROL OF GOD, verse 14. *So the king hearkened not unto the people, for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah.* Rehoboam was not forced into his foolish and wicked decision, and yet that decision was in accord-

ance the Divine will. "Here the historian draws back the curtain. On earth and the insolent king and the now mutinous people, neither free from the s selfishness. A stormy scene of passion without thought of God, rages beloand above sits the Lord, working his great purpose by men's sin" (Mah). For the Divine purpose see paragraph 3, page 34, and for *his to Jeroboam* see 1 K. 11.26-40.

*THE REVOLT OF ISRAEL AND THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDO*rses 16,17. The ten northern tribes, or *all Israel*, mutinied at Rehoboa words. *What portion*—what concern, or interest—*have we in the house of D?* they questioned. *Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.* We not belong to David's household (David was the son of Jesse, and Rehm was Jesse's great-grandson), for we are not of the tribe of Judah. The jealousy of the Northern Tribes toward the Tribe of Judah, David's tribd smoldered during the reigns of David and Solomon, and now it broprth anew. Using the old phrase of dismissal which dated from their nonlays, they cried, *To your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, Da* Let us go home and manage our own affairs, they meant, and you, O dant of David, may rule over your own tribe, but you can not rule over us; forswear our allegiance. *So Israel departed unto their tents.*

REHOBOAM'S FUTILE ATTEMPT TO MASTER ISRAEL, verses 17.-In an attempt to carry out his threat of verse 14, Rehoboam sent a taskmanamed Adoram to quell the Northern Tribes, but they stoned Adoram to h. Rehoboam then fled to Jerusalem and gathered an army, but being wa through Shemiah the prophet not to fight against his brethren in the Nohe desisted from his purpose. Meanwhile the Northern Tribes sent for Jem and made him their king.

"JEROBOAM, WHO MADE ISRAEL TO SIN," verses 26-30. "Wt of responsibility is measured by greatness of opportunity. The man winfluence over multitudes can cause larger good or larger evil than the mwith influence over a small circle. And when the life of a nation is fluid, thesponsibility of leadership is accentuated. Tradition is the brake on the wl of change. When tradition has been sacrificed and the past has been sced and the vehicle rides free, then the man in charge most of all needs tove with caution. Jeroboam had an unequaled opportunity to mould the Nern Tribes. Because he failed calamitously, his name has gone down to ales branded as a malignant influence on a whole nation. His abiding title is roboam, who made Israel to sin.' We are witnessing the foundation of ne European) States at the present time. When we compare their impoverisnt, their recent expenditure of blood and treasure, the insecurity of their gnments, we are able to realise the unequalled opportunity granted to Jerob to work his will on his people" (R. C. Gillie).

oboam rebuilt and fortified Shechem and Penuel, and then looked around te how he might further strengthen his kingdom. His people went to Jerusa to celebrate the great religious festivals in the temple, and he began to fthat this union for worship would eventually lead to the political union qe two kingdoms. The way to prevent this was to have his people worship ame, but as Matthew Henry observes, "Jeroboam would not be at the charge cuilding a golden temple, as Solomon had done: two golden calves were most he could afford." At the two ends of his kingdom, Bethel in the south Dan in the north, he set up a golden calf and said to his people, *It is too h for you to go up to Jersualem* (from Shechem it was only twenty-nine s to Jerusalem): *behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the l of Egypt.* Compare the words of Aaron in Ex. 32.4, when he presented the den calf to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

h the temple worship at Jerusalem Jeroboam saw also an immediate danger the loss of trade, as Dr. George Adam Smith points out in his book upon usalem. "The sanctuaries of the time were its principal markets as well, and trade, which a monarch so vigilant of the commercial interests of his realm Solomon must have included in his designs in building the temple, would be gely diverted to its courts. At Bethel, which, besides possessing more ancient ligious associations than Jerusalem, stood near the junction of two trade utes, Jeroboam instituted at harvest time a great festival which would also a great fair. This was only twelve miles from Jerusalem, and in times of ace would attract, by its double temptation, numbers of traders from Judah."

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VIII. CALAMITOUS SUCCESS, verse 30. *And this thing be a sin,* says the historian; *for the people went to worship before the one each of them,* RVm), *even unto Dan.* This sin of Jeroboam, which caus Israel to sin, is referred to twenty-three times in the Books of the Kings. ne may measure the guilt of starting or furthering another on a false p In his finest poem John Donne makes this appeal to Heaven:—

'Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?'

When by our sin, we open the door to our neighbor, who may predic other doors to which it may lead" (Watkinson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The king forsook the counsel of the old men, verse 13. Rehoboam reby sinned against custom. In the East vastly greater reverence has alv been paid to age than in the West. At the present time it is the old men settle affairs of state in the Arab tribes.

My father made your yoke heavy, verse 14. The yoke worn by ox was a clumsy, heavy affair, so galling that it often wore off the hair and m sores, hence it was a fit emblem of oppression and servitude. Forced lab was a part of the yoke which Solomon put upon his people.

In a deep rock cutting high above the railway that now leads to Dar us, a Latin inscription praises the Roman Emperor and the Prefect und whose auspices the ancient aqueduct and chariot-road were constructed, but eath, in differently shaped letters which were evidently filled in with cement con-cealed from that Prefect's eyes, are two words that speak volumes—*ensis Abilenetorum,* At the cost of the people of Abilene!

I will chastise you with scropions, verse 14. One of the earliest rec ions of the Rev. Abraham Mitrie Rihbany's life in Syria was the grabbing ome-thing on the floor which turned out to be a scorpion. The fiery sting rced under his thumb nail, and he rolled on the floor all night in agony. "I no hesitancy in saying," he says, "that when Rehoboam said to the pe of Israel, 'I will chastise you with scorpions,' he made a telling figure, the people of that country, which is full of all manner of creeping thing ust have understood his meaning clearly."

Then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, verse 27 t is interesting in this connection to recall the fact that Assurbanipal, king of ria, 668-626 B. C. (the great and noble Asnapper of Ezra 4.10), founded th yal library which has preserved for us so valuable a collection of the best by-lonian and Assyrian inscriptions, not from love of literature but in o to prevent the young Assyrians from going down to Babylon to be ed ed, "where treasonable ideas would be instilled into their minds by the pri of Babylon, who were always in patriotic opposition to Assyria."

He set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan, verse 29. Dean Sley recalls the similar policy of Abder-Rahman, Caliph of Spain, in arresti he movement of his subjects to Mecca by erecting a Holy Place of the Z at Cordova; and of Abdel-Malek in building the Dome of the Rock at Jeru m, because he had quarreled with the authorities at Mecca and did not wi is people to go there to worship.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first kin f the Israelites? On his death what two kings ruled for seven and a half ys, each over part of the kingdom? What led to this division of the king ? What tribes belonged to each division? What led the Northern Tribe o choose David as their king, too? How long did David reign? What sor f king was he? Who was his successor? Who had foretold great injustice suffering which would come upon the people through their king?

The Despotism of Solomon. Solomon began his reign under the happ auspices. He started well, acknowledging his inexperience and asking wis in guiding his people. Next he built the temple, and dedicated it with a be tiful prayer. He became famous for his riches and his wisdom. But his

years were a contradiction of his first. His "enthusiasm for humanity was supplanted by enthusiasm for money," and it came to pass, when he was old, that his wives (seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines) turned away his heart after other gods, 1 K. 11.4.

"Solomon needed large resources to maintain his own magnificent estate and to enable him to carry out his schemes for making Jerusalem the worthy metropolis of his empire (quoting R. L. Ottley in his Short History of the Hebrews). The revenue which he derived from commerce was of course considerable. He collected tolls from the caravans which were constantly traversing his territory; he made a large profit by carrying on a traffic in horses, which he procured from Egypt and sold to the kings of the Hittites and other peoples of Western Asia. He even seems to have borrowed heavily from the neighboring kingdom of Tyre, and the repayment of the loan ultimately involved the cession to Hiram of a district which included twenty cities (1 K. 9.11). But naturally he relied chiefly on the surplus raised by taxation of his own subjects. Accordingly Palestine was divided, without regard to any distinction between Canaanites and Israelites, into twelve fiscal districts, each controlled by an overseer who was charged with the duty of providing during one month of the year for the expenses of the royal household. Apparently the Judahites were exempted from the burden of taxation, doubtless with the object of attaching the tribe more closely to the Davidic dynasty. The other tribes naturally resented a system which pressed so heavily on themselves and which practically ministered to the strength and importance of Judah and Jerusalem alone. The old tribal jealousies were fanned into flame by discontent with the king's oppressive regime, for Solomon in spite of his wisdom and skill in the art of government soon betrayed the characteristic failings of an oriental despot."

Jeroboam's Revolt. During the latter part of Solomon's reign rebellion was rife. Jeroboam, a humble man in the tribe of Ephraim, came to Jerusalem and by his intelligence and enterprise gained for himself an important place in Solomon's building forces. He was placed over the levy of his own tribesmen, who were engaged upon the fortification of Millo, a great tower of the citadel. Angered by their oppression, and ambitious for his own advancement, Jeroboam headed a revolt against King Solomon.

Meanwhile, the prophet Ahijah came to Jeroboam with a startling message. Taking a new piece of cloth, Ahijah tore it into twelve pieces and handed ten of them to Jeroboam. This symbolic act meant, as he explained, that Israel was to be punished for neglecting God, the kingdom would be divided after Solomon's death, and Jeroboam should rule over ten tribes. When Solomon learned of this prophecy he sought to kill Jeroboam, but the latter fled to Egypt and there remained till Solomon's death.

Solomon's Successor. Saul and David had been made king by representatives of the people, while Solomon had been chosen by his father. Precedent had not yet decreed the throne hereditary. On the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam was probably crowned at Jerusalem before he went to Shechem to have his sovereignty acknowledged by the tribes who were on the verge of revolt.

The Causes of the Disruption of the Kingdom under Rehoboam. "Who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool?" Ecclesiastes questions, and our lesson shows how far from being a wise man was Rehoboam. His arrogant folly was the immediate cause, the last straw, one might say, which brought about the division of the kingdom.

A deeper-lying cause of the disruption, as we have seen, lay in the Northern Tribes' jealousy of Judah, for whose aggrandizement all their labor at Jerusalem went. This jealousy was of long standing, and the two kingdoms had never been one at heart. In early Hebrew history the Northern Tribes had been the leaders. In the time of the Judges a line of Canaanitish strongholds, of which Jebus (later called Jerusalem) was the chief, extended east and west across the land of Canaan, separating the Northern from the Southern Tribes. The Ephraimites, as representatives of the Tribe of Joseph (which had been divided into the Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in order to secure for it a double portion in the original distribution of the land), had claimed pre-eminence. Within their territory was Shiloh, the early sanctuary. When David became king the sanctuary was removed to Jerusalem and the supremacy passed to Judah. There had been fitful outbursts of jealousy during David's reign, but

it was kept in check by the enthusiasm engendered by his military enterprises and by his powerful, diplomatic rule. It had grown stronger during Solomon's reign, for his interest was centered in Judah and Jerusalem. Now there was neither a diplomatic nor a strong hand to keep it under.

Date of the Division of the Kingdom. A date given in the Assyrian inscriptions, 854 B. C., was in the reign of Ahab. Reckoning back from this, the time of the division of the Israelites into two kingdoms falls somewhere between 938 and 916 B. C. (the sixty-two years' reign of Ahab's predecessors being added either to the beginning or to the end of Ahab's twenty-one years' reign). The date usually accepted is 937 B. C. Dr. G. A. Smith says 933 B. C., assigning Rehoboam's reign over Judah from 933 to 917 B. C.

The Far-reaching Effect of the Division of the Kingdom. It was the beginning of disasters that culminated in the overthrow of both kingdoms. In a little over two centuries the Northern Tribes were carried off into captivity by the Assyrians and one hundred and thirty-six years later the kingdom of Judah came to an end at the hands of the Babylonians. During the century that followed the death of Solomon Egypt was weak and Assyria was inactive, and had the tribes of the Israelites remained united they might have become a great Jewish Empire, powerful enough to absorb the other kingdoms along the Mediterranean. Why, then, was this crisis, so far-reaching in its baneful effects, brought about by God? The Israelites were God's chosen people, and their peculiar mission was not to attain political success, but to receive and transmit high spiritual blessing. Political success meant oriental despotism and idolatry. Political failure meant the rule of the prophets rather than that of the kings. "It was only in the furnace of affliction that those perverse, insignificant Canaanitish tribes were prepared for the reception of their commission. Approaching captivity led their prophets to open wider their spiritual eyes until they beheld, instead of a local God of one little nation, a Lord supreme in the affairs of men and in the universe. Out of the depths of their private and national woe, those divinely enlightened men caught glimpses of the character of the Eternal and of his purposes which enabled them to rise above national annihilation and exile, and to give to their nation and the world hopes and truths and principles which are the eternal foundations of religious faith. Thus, while by the Disruption the Hebrew nation lost its life, in a truer and higher sense it found it, and was prepared in turn to transmit this life and hope to humanity."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After the division, the territory of Israel was nearly three times as large as that of Judah (Israel, 9,400 square miles; Judah, 3,400). Its land was far more fertile than Judah's; to it belonged the rich plain of Jezreel and the wooded hills of Ephraim and Carmel. Its highways were traversed by traders from the adjacent lands, and its people became very prosperous.

Jerusalem, which had been the capital of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon, after the division was the capital of Judah. *Shechem* (modern Nablous, where the great convocation was held when the Northern tribes revolted from Rehoboam, became the capital of the Northern Kingdom. It is twenty-nine miles north of Jerusalem, at the foot of Mount Gerizim. It was the most important place in this kingdom, because on the trade route from Gilead to the sea-coast. From the time that Abraham came to the place called Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh, until Jesus had his famous conversation at the well with the woman of Samaria, not far from Shechem, it held an important place in Biblical history.

Bethel was near the southern border of Jeroboam's Kingdom, only twelve miles north of Jerusalem. Here Abraham and Jacob had worshipped, and it had been the home of the prophet Samuel. Its name means "House of God," for it was here that Jacob slept and dreamed when on his way to Padam-Aram.

Dan was in the extreme northern end of Jeroboam's Kingdom near one of the sources of the Jordan. A low, circular hill covered with stones and thistles is the traditional site. It had been a "holy city" in the time of the Judges; a graven image there was worshipped under the offices of a Levitical priest, a grandson of Moses (Judges 18.26-31).

Let your pupils draw a map of the Divided Kingdom and locate the places

as they are mentioned each week. Assign paragraphs 119, 147 and 148 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER TRAINING THOUGHTS

Before reading the following, and all the other suggested reflections and applications of the rich content of this lesson, turn to page 16 of our Introduction and read paragraphs 3 and 4.

Lead your pupils to mention positions of authority they hold, as older brother or sister, game leader, monitor, mother, employer, chairman, etc., and show the analogy here to the position of Rehoboam. Then ask about the subordinate positions they occupy, as pupil, employé, club member, etc., which may be likened to that of Rehoboam's subjects.

Next discuss (1) The effect on subordinates of actual severity and of severity of manner. (2) The effect on superiors of actual insubordination, of "back talk," of gentle remonstrance. (3) The distribution of responsibility: who has most? Has the other none? You have a fine opportunity here of influencing attitudes in families, schools, shops, etc.

Get testimony as to where your pupils seek advice. From those who readily agree with their own secret desire? From those with experience in *their* place? In the other one's place? From God, in genuine prayer?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
INDUSTRIAL UNREST AND ITS CURE

Beginning the Lesson. The subject of our lesson is singularly timely. It is the story of a conflict between insecure authority and insurgent labor. "It is a revelation of the underlying circumstances which provide the materials for an explosion, the actual subject in debate being nothing more than the match which fires the gunpowder train. Rehoboam's lack of statesmanship, his shortsighted tyranny, and his stupid insolence to an aggrieved people, are pilloried in this lesson for all time."

"It will last my time," returned Louis XV, when some one remonstrated with him for draining France to glorify Paris. "A similar thought must surely have come at times to Solomon, the Wise King of Israel, as the blundering and incompetent character of his son Rehoboam disclosed itself," thinks Dr. John Kelman. See the Historical Background.

Industrial Unrest after Solomon's Death. See the Text Explained and Illumined.

Why Office Workers are Satisfied. Everybody takes a hand these days in discussing industrial problems, but I don't hear much about the "white collar" workers in the office.

Do you know why the office worker is as well satisfied as anybody with his lot? It's because he sees and understands the problems of his boss, and he's satisfied to see the president paid a $50,000 salary because he is close enough to know he earns the money.

If you could make the industrial worker understand what capital and management are doing for him, it would go a long way toward curing this so-called "unrest."

The average factory hand today has no conception of what capital is being invested for him in better machinery and tools to make a better job for him.—Thomas Edison.

One Cure for Industrial Unrest: an Interest in the Product. The President of the National Milk Producers' Association says that the reason the farmers do not go on a strike is because they have an interest in the crop raised. "The farmer is not more patriotic than any other worker, but his refusal to strike is deep-seated in the principle that must be adopted in other industries—his interest in the product of his labor." The owner of a farm receives the entire output of the labor he expends on it. The tenant receives a certain percentage of the product, usually one-half of a growing crop.

Another Cure for Industrial Unrest: Fitting Men and Women into Jobs where they are Contented. Dr. Kirchwey, formerly warden at Sing Sing, was walking down Fifth Avenue one day when he was hailed from the curb. "Hello, Warden!" came a voice. Turning, he saw that it came from a chauffeur

who stood by a handsome limousine. Out went a hand, and the man continued: "Do you remember me? I'm the man you did a lot for when you took me out of the knit shop up at Sing Sing."

Then Dr. Kirchwey did remember. The man had asked to go into the machine shop. This permission the warden granted, and later on the man was given work in the automobile shop.

"Say, Warden," he went on, "I'm doing fine. Drawing down forty-five a week, own a $1,200 machine myself, and I've got the nicest wife in New York City."

"Good," smiled the man who had helped to make this possible. "And how long have you been getting all these desirable things?"

"Just fourteen months, since I got out," came the proud reply.

"And what did you do before we met?"

"Never did an honest day's work before in my life. Say, take it from me, Warden, this beats the old game every way. You couldn't get me to do any crooked work for anything. I'm happy."

The square peg was in the square hole. A job and contentment therewith is one cure for unrest.—New York Tribune.

Another Cure for Industrial Unrest: the Power of the Second Mile. What foolish, short-sighted people we all are; both employers and wage-earners! We business men think that the world is governed by intellect. It is not. We think people are controlled by their minds. They are not. Both employers and wage-earners are controlled by their emotions; by love or hate; by sympathy or jealousy; by hope or fear. If this is so, it is evident that only religion can bring together employers and wage-earners.

The labor problem is really a question of religion rather than of economics. The problem can never be settled by the methods now being used by either side. It can be settled only by each side thinking more of the community and less of itself; and only as the church takes an active part in the struggle. What would Jesus tell both sides of the labor conflict were he here today? I think he would say what we read in the thirty-eighth to the forty-second verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew. He would advise each side to win the other by loaning them the cloak also. The secret of success is to do more than is demanded. In advising his hearers to give up their cloak also, when some one sued them at law to take away their coat—to go an extra mile when compelled to go only one—Jesus emphasized a great psychological truth. Jesus understood that the Law of Equal Reaction applies to human relations as it applies to astronomy, chemistry and mechanics. He knew that to get a beneficial reaction we must go the second mile. There is no power nor glory in doing only what we have to do. The glory comes with the second mile. The side which ultimately will win this labor conflict is the side which will voluntarily give up the most.—Roger W. Babson, in Religion and Business.

The Certain Cure for Industrial Unrest. A supreme loyalty to God, a supreme enthusiasm for humanity, and an august standard of righteousness, if all these could be brought into modern life today one-half—nay nine-tenths—of our problems would be solved. Think of men with a great sense of God, and a tremendous conception of the rights of men, and a passion for righteousness, coming up to the complex question of the relations of Capital and Labor, or to the discussion of wages, and hours of labor, and educational facilities, and all that concerns the welfare of the workers! The fact of the matter is, we do not address ourselves to these questions in a large and luminous way. We are inclined to come to our public questions in the spirit of dull compromise, and often the only passion we call to our aid is the spirit of fervent hope that we shall muddle through.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

For Discussion. 1. How do we show good will to subordinates: by comradeship or patronage? How do we receive patronage: with scorn, or with tolerant appreciation of the real good will?

2. Would you rather be ruled by a smart knave or a foolish knave (Jeroboam or Rehoboam)? Can an ignorant good person succeed in ruling?

3. Who can be ruled by coercion? under what circumstances? after effects? Give experiences with animals, children, employés.

4. How grievances should be met. See Mistaken Labor Policies, The Christian Century, August 26, 1920; What's the Trouble? The Outlook, Jan. 19, 1921; A More Christian Industrial Order, by Dr. H. S. Coffin.

5. The happy side of industrial relations. See The Outlook, July 21, 1920.

6. Is John Spargo right in saying: "It is not the business of the church, through the pulpit or otherwise, to pass judgment upon the respective merits of the programs of the Single Taxer and the Socialist, for example. In other words, the function of the church, as I conceive it, is to promote the vision of social righteousness, not to devise the mechanism for achieving it. The individual Christian may well accept a definite and precise program: the Christian church cannot do so without grave danger." See the discussion in the Supplement to The Christian Century, Sept. 30, 1920.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Jeroboam pay too dear a price for power? 2. Who succeeded Jeroboam, and what sort of king was he? 3. What was the chief event in his son Baasha's reign? 4. How did Zimri come to the throne? 5. How did Omri gain the kingship? 6. What city did Omri make the capital? 7. What is told about Ahab in 1 K. 16? 8. Whose example did Omri and Ahab follow? 9. Who was Jezebel, and what influence did she exert over Ahab? 10. Over the religious life of the Israelites? 11. What led Elijah to speak to Ahab the words of our first verse? (1 K. 16.29-33.) 12. What is the main lesson for today from our text? 13. Why are Kings and Chronicles divided? 14. What do we know as to their authorship? (See page 20 of our Introduction.)

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
TWO KINGS WHO LOST THEIR OPPORTUNITIES

Beginning the Lesson. There once lived in Japan a good king so anxiously concerned for the welfare of his people that he set a drum at the palace gate, and gave directions that whoever had any wrong to be redressed, or any want, should beat the drum, promising that at once, by day or by night, he would grant the suppliant an audience and relief. But throughout the land there was such prosperity and contentment that no one needed to appeal for anything, and the birds built their nests within the drum, and filled it with the music of their song.

What a contrast to this picture we have in the scene before Rehoboam when people from the Northern tribes came to him for redress of grievances!

Rehoboam's Folly. Solomon's early prayer, when God appeared to him in a dream by night and asked what he should give him, was: "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?" Had this been the prayer of his son Rehoboam on ascending the throne, the Northern Tribes would not have revolted. But Rehoboam had no wish to discern between good and evil; he believed in "the divine right of kings" to govern as despots.

Rehoboam went to Shechem to meet the assembled tribes. There Samuel had been acclaimed as king, and then David, and then Solomon, and always the people had shouted and rejoiced. But this time the people waited to see what sort of king Rehoboam would profess to be. "Your father treated us very harshly," they reminded him. "He made our yoke heavier than we could bear. We had to work like slaves for very little reward. How do you propose to treat us?"

Rehoboam's first mistake was in asking the advice of any one. His own heart should have told him that the request of the people was just and right, and instead of asking for three days' delay he should have answered at once, "I will make your yoke lighter." The people would have made the valley ring with their joyous shouts of "Hail to the King!" It is always a mistake to consult others about a plain duty.

His second mistake was in following the wrong advice. He turned from the counsel of the old men to that of the young men which was in harmony with his own desires—to get all he could and give nothing. What reply did he make to the people? How did they receive it?

Thus the people of Israel were divided and became two kingdoms. Rehoboam lost the larger and better part of his father's kingdom, and reigned in Jerusalem over Judah and the little tribe of Benjamin only.

Be Ready to Follow Good Advice. Youth often scorns advice, especially the advice of old age. Young people are inclined to think of old people as old fogies. Some of them may be, but there is a wisdom that comes only with experience, and the advice of most old people is worthy of consideration.

They have traveled over the ground and have learned how best to meet its dangers and surprises. There will be bitter regret in store for one who must confess with Proverbs: "How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof, neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me."

Shun Evil Counsel. Said an English judge: "If I had listened when I was young to the advice of some who called themselves my friends, instead of being a judge of the king's bench I should have died long ago a prisoner in the king's jail."

Bull-headedness is Expensive. The great danger of success is that it tends to breed in a man pride in his own opinion; and pride, as the Bible puts it, goes before a fall. There was no place in Napoleon's plan of things for advice or advisers. "I judge by my own judgment and reason," he wrote proudly, "and not by the opinion of others." In the final analysis a man must, of course, rely on his own experience and judgment. But self-reliance is quite a different thing from arrogant bull-headedness. Napoleon wanted to invade England. As long as her power was unbroken he knew that his plans of world conquest must fail. With elaborate preparations he trained his troops and marshalled them along the French side of the English Channel. Even while he still hesitated to make the attempt Fate came along and put into his hands a weapon which might have given him victory.

The weapon was the steamboat; it would have made him independent of wind and tide in his attempt to cross the channel. Fulton, knowing his ambition, had brought it to him, and Napoleon would not even see him! Without a moment's investigation he branded the inventor as a charlatan and sent him away. That same impatience of advice, which turned Fulton away without a hearing, reddened the snows of Russia with the blood of the Grand Army, and prepared the way for the end.—The American Magazine.

Jeroboam's Folly. The other ten tribes established a separate kingdom which was henceforth known as the Northern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Israel, with a capital at Shechem. Jeroboam, their king, did not wish his people to go to Jerusalem: why? How did he prevent their going to the temple there? What great opportunity was his, and how did he lose it? See VII under The Text Explained.

Jeroboam's plan was shrewd, as a means of accomplishing his purpose, it was successful, his people were turned from Jerusalem and the temple, from Rehoboam and the Judeans, and his own power was established. But he gained his power at the cost of disenthroning God and degrading his people.

When Henry Clay was about to introduce into Congress a certain measure, one of his friends whom he consulted, said: "If you do that, it will kill your chances for the presidency." "But is the measure right?" returned Clay. "Yes, it is right." "Then I would rather be right than president." Jeroboam preferred to be wrong and be king.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

A soft answer turneth away wrath;
But a grievous word stirreth up anger.—Prov. 15.1.

Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.—Prov. 16.18.

The eyes of Experience make rich.—Oriental Proverb.

One good word can warm three winter months.—Chinese Proverb.

Note-Book Work. Begin a note-book entitled Leaders and Prophets of Israel (Northern Kingdom). Today write I. Jeroboam, the First King of the Northern Kingdom. (Always assign the note-book work for the week following the teaching of the lesson.)

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do we have two books of Kings? 2. Who wrote them? (See page 20 of our Introduction.) 3. What does "the Tishbite, of the sojourners of Gilead" mean? 4. How is Elijah described in 2 K. 1.8? 5. What did Elijah mean by saying "Jehovah, before whom I stand"? 6. For what was the drought a punishment? (1 K. 16.31-33.) 7. Why did Elijah flee from Ahab? 8. What city was now the capital of Israel, and where was it located? 9. Where was the Brook Cherith? 10. Zarephath? 11. What reference did Jesus make to the widow of Zarephath? (Lk. 4.24-26.)

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

Golden Text

But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6.33

LESSON 1 Kings 17.1-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 62.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Exodus 16; 1 Kings 16.29-33; Matthew 6.19-34

1 KINGS 17.1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. 2 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. 4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of Jehovah; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

8 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. 12 And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days. 16 The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ELIJAH AND AHAB: THE DROUGHT PREDICTED, verse 1. *Elijah the Tishbite,* that is, a native of Thisbe, *who was one of the sojourners of Gilead,* a member of the tribe of Naphtali who dwelt for a time in Gilead, now appears for the first time upon the sacred pages. In 2 K. 1.8 he is described as "a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." "The name of Elijah was made from two words, *Eli,* meaning *my God,* and *Jah,* the short form of *Jehovah.* 'My God is Jehovah'—the name suits him! It grew out of him like his shaggy beard, for he spent his life recalling the faithless people from the false worship of Baal to the true worship of Jehovah the living God"(Brown). Ahab was then the King of Israel and "he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah above all that were before him" (1 K. 16.30); before Ahab Elijah suddenly appeared and declared that a long drought was coming upon the land as punishment from God for the king's sins (see 1 K. 16.32). *As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth,* Elijah solemnly affirmed, making use of the customary form of an oath, *before whom I stand,* whose servant I am, *there shall not be dew nor rain these years.* Without the dew or rain there could be no harvests; the hand of God was especially recognized in the giving or withholding of rain. The drought would be of long duration—in the third

year, 1 K. 18.1; three years and six months, Lk. 4.25 and Jas. 5.17—and would cease only at the prophet's word. He prayed fervently that it might not rain, and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, Jas. 5.17,18. "There was a certain poetic justice in it—the punishment fitted the crime. The heathen Baal had been held up as the god of fertility presiding over the productive and reproductive processes of nature—now let him show his hand if he be all that! There fell upon Israel a withering rebuke—drought and famine overtook them the very day when they had forsaken their altars to seek favor with this 'god of fertility.' It was taking the devil's club out of his own hand to beat him with" (Chas. R. Brown). "Ahab is the proudest and fiercest spirit of his day, absolute monarch, possessing the power of life and death. At his side is Jezebel, who is as much more ambitious than her husband as Lady Macbeth is more ambitious than Macbeth. The prophet stands before them. Does he? In point of fact, he is more conscious of standing before God. In the consciousness of God's presence is the prophet's sense of courage" (Albertson).

II. ELIJAH A SUFFERER FROM THE DROUGHT AT THE BROOK CHERITH, verses 2-7. *The word of Jehovah came unto Elijah, saying.* This and kindred phrases, such as "Thus saith Jehovah," "Jehovah spake," occur about two thousand times in the Old Testament. The phrases are familiar formulas of all the prophets, and express their sincere conviction that they are speaking or acting in accordance with the will of God as revealed to them through mental impulses or "by divers portions and in divers manners." *Get thee hence,* to avoid the wrath of Ahab and Jezebel, for Ahab sought him everywhere, 1 K. 18.10, *and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before,* or east of, *the Jordan,* where there were convenient caves. *I have commanded the ravens to feed thee.* I will use the ravens as my agents. "All circumstances are the voice of God, commanding or restraining" (Maclaren). Did Elijah kill and eat them, or did he claim some of their prey for his own sustenance? Many think that instead of *ravens* we should change a single vowel in the Hebrew, and read *Orebites,* or Arabs, and others explain that *merchants* are meant. That Elijah was miraculously fed by the ravens is no more difficult to believe than that he was miraculously fed by the widow's unfailing jar and cruse: in each case the Divine care of the man of God is equally shown, whether or not the events can be accounted for by known laws. Whether the writer of the stories about Elijah intended the statements which read like miracles to be understood literally, or as poetical, pictorial statements of facts, each one must judge for himself.

Elijah sought the brook Cherith, and *the ravens brought him bread and flesh.* "Those who have watched the habits of large birds can bear witness to the large supply which they bring home under ordinary circumstances" (Lumby).

III. ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH, verses 8-16. When the brook dried up, Elijah was led to turn his steps to Zarephath, called Sarepta in New Testament times. "It was far away that he had to go—beyond the borders of the land of Israel, over the hills of Lebanon, down into the Maritime Plain. The fresh streams of Lebanon would retain their life-giving power after the scantier springs of Palestine had been dried up. But there also the drought had reached. We learn from heathen records that the famine was long remembered in Phœnicia, and that solemn prayers were offered up in the temples of Astarte by Ethbaal, King of Tyre, for the descent of rain upon the earth" (Stanley). *I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee,* was the word of Jehovah that came to Elijah. "Perhaps we are to suppose that, just as the ravens were commanded and knew not by whom, so this woman received the command, when she saw the travel-stained and gaunt stranger, through her womanly impulses of compassion, not knowing who moved them nor what she did when she sheltered the man whose life was, at that moment, the most important thing in the world" (Maclaren).

At the *gate of the city,* Elijah met *a widow gathering sticks,* and he begged her for a drink of water. She started for the water, and he called after her, *Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread.* Recognizing Elijah as an Israelite by his speech and garb, the widow replied, *As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake,* only *a handful of meal in the jar,* and a little oil in *the cruse.* Note the definite articles; every household was provided with the jar and the cruse. Olive oil took the place of butter in the preparation of food. Syrians still prefer the oil to butter, as it can be more easily kept in their hot climate, and they

still keep their meal in an earthen jar to prevent its being destroyed by insects. The widow's cruse probably had a small handle near the bottom and a straight spout with a small opening, like the clay cruse in use in Palestine today. The woman was about to build a fire and with her son partake of her last meal, she further informed Elijah. "Go on with good courage and hope for better things," was Elijah's message to her. Bidding her first of all make a little cake for him, trusting there would be enough afterwards for herself and son, he assured her that *the jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth.* "Of her heroic faith it might well be said, 'I have not found the like, no, not in Israel,' " for *she went and did according to the saying of Elijah.*

And she, and he, and her house, did eat many days, for Elijah abode there till the drought was about to end. In Lk. 4.24-26 Jesus makes no reference to the miraculous element in this account, but is interested in the fact that, persecuted in his own country, Elijah found a refuge with a woman of another land—an instance of one who, like Jesus himself, was a prophet without honor in his own country.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Who was of the sojourners of Gilead, verse 1. All the characteristics of the man are in keeping with his birth and early training—a Gileadite. For Gilead, then as now, was a land of nomads, wild, rough men, half shepherds, half cattle-lifters. The prophet's dress proclaimed the mountaineer of the Arabian border, exactly the same as is worn today: the undergarment bound with a broad leather belt, and over it a loose, coarse cloak of sheepskin, with the wool outside, its dark-brown folds floating in the wind as he hurriedly strode along with bare head and long black locks covering his neck: for he was a Nazirite. The Moslem prophet-dervish, as different from the dervish of the towns as Elijah from a Levite of Jerusalem, exactly copies this dress and habit. He has no settled home; no man knows his route. I have known one startle an Arab party at feast by his sudden apparition, ejaculating some verses of the Koran, warning his listeners against the Giaours, and calling on them to fight for "the faith," and then stalk forth from the awe-stricken company to seek shelter and food from the humblest and poorest, who receive his visit as the highest of honors.—Tristam, in Eastern Customs.

There shall not be dew nor rain these years, verse 1. To Eastern nations, where life and water go always together, where vegetation gathers round the slightest particle of moisture, and dies the moment it is withdrawn; where the scanty verdure of spring fades like melting snow, before the burning heat of summer—the withholding of rain is the withholding of pleasure, of sustenance, of life itself: the springs are dried up, the brooks and rivers become beds of stone, the trees wither, the grass vanishes, "the heaven that is over thee becomes brass, and the earth that is under thee is as iron."—Dean Stanley.

Behold, a widow was there gathering sticks, verse 10. Fuel is so scarce in Palestine today that one sees women carrying small twigs and thorn branches on their heads which they have "gleaned" with as much care as the Swiss peasants glean their fields.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first king of the Northern Tribes? What sort of king was he? For what is he remembered?

Conditions in the Kingdom of Israel from Jeroboam to Omri. *Jeroboam,* the first king of Israel, "sinned and made Israel to sin." He had a troubled reign of twenty-two years. His son *Nadab* ruled only two years, and was slain in a conspiracy raised by *Baasha,* his own commander-in-chief. Baasha "waded to the throne through blood," for his first act was to establish his rule by putting to death all the descendants of Jeroboam. The chief event of Baasha's reign was his attempt to gain control of the Southern Kingdom in the reign of Asa, which was frustrated by the interference of the Syrian king, Ben-hadad. The prophet Jehu denounced Baasha and told him that because he walked in the way of Jeroboam, all his house should be destroyed. Twenty-four years Baasha reigned and died in peace, and was buried in state. His son *Elah* reigned only two brief years, and then the captain of half his chariot force, *Zimri,* con-

spired against him and murdered him as he sat in Tirzah, then the capital, "drinking himself drunk." Zimri immediately slew the remainder of the royal house of Baasha, but he met in return a terrible death after only a week's reign. The army at this time was besieging the Philistine town of Gibbethon, and when the news came of Elah's murder, they made *Omri,* their general, king, and marched to Tirzah and besieged it. When Zimri saw the city taken, he set fire to the castle of the palace and perished in the flames. Omri thus gained the throne from Zimri, but he had a second rival to conquer, for half of the people preferred *Tibni.* The contest between them lasted perhaps four years, and ended with the victory of Omri, "so Tibni died and Omri reigned."

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

We have reviewed fifty years in this history from Jeroboam to Omri, and in this brief time have seen three dynasties and five kings on the throne of Israel; Jeroboam and his son Nadab; Baasha and his son Elah; and Zimri.

With Omri begins the fourth dynasty. The writer of Kings gives but a passing notice of Omri, mentioning the length of his reign, his choice of Samaria for a capital, and his idolatry, though he does allude to "his might that he showed." Yet Omri was one of Israel's greatest kings; Professor Kent terms him "in certain respects the David of Northern Israel," and draws a parallel between David's choice of Jerusalem and Omri's choice of Samaria. Omri was so powerful a ruler that to the Assyrians even down to Jehu's time the kings of Israel were known as "the house of Omri." To the Arameans (Syrians) whose center was Damascus and who were the great land traders of the Eastern world, Omri was obliged to cede certain territory and certain rights in Samaria for their merchants (1 K. 20.34), but perhaps he was not loath to do this, as it was his policy to seek commercial greatness for Israel. He it must have been who arranged Ahab's marriage with Jezebel, seeking this alliance with Phœnicia for political and commercial reasons. Omri reigned 887 to 875 B. C.

The Early Part of Ahab's Reign. Ahab reigned twenty-two years. He reared an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria, made the Asherah, and did yet more to provoke Jehovah to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. Jeroboam had set the downward pace, it had gained momentum under his successors, especially Omri, and it now threatened to strike the lowest level, that of their pagan neighbors. It was in one of the darkest periods of the history of the Northern Kingdom that Elijah appeared.

Elijah and Jezebel. Schools of the prophets had been formed in various places, and the prophets had established altars for the true worship of Jehovah. At their head was Elijah: at the head of the Baal worshippers was Queen Jezebel. Her father, Ethbaal, was a former priest of Baal, who had mounted the Tyrian throne by assassinating the reigning king. "Jezebel thus inherited unusual ability and energy, a strong religious zeal and those oriental despotic ideals which hesitated at no crime in attaining personal ends." Jezebel undertook to annihilate the prophets and thought herself successful, but Obadiah, who was over the king's household, feared Jehovah and hid a hundred prophets in caves and fed them with bread and water, 1 K. 18.3,4. The time for heroic action had come.

"I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God," the people had learned under Moses: his champion now is the stern, uncompromising Gileadite, Elijah. The abruptness with which he is introduced is often commented upon, and many believe that his words of our first verse are his ultimatum, following an omitted talk with King Ahab. But all his appearances are unannounced and sudden. "The great man was always as lightning out of Heaven," Carlyle comments: "the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they, too, would flame."

The Change in the Book of Kings. With the 17th chapter of 1 Kings we enter upon wholly different scenes. Somewhat monotonously the earlier chapters have told of the kings of Israel and of Judah, good kings and bad kings, kings who worshipped Jehovah and kings who thought Jehovah and Baal might be worshipped side by side. Now we pass for a time from kings to prophets, from formal statements to graphic narratives, from the history of both kingdoms to that of the Northern Kingdom exclusively.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The first capital of the Northern Kingdom was at Shechem; the second, at Tirzah. Probably the burning of the palace at Tirzah by Zimri and the ease with which the besiegers captured the city in the civil broils (see The Historical Background), led Omri to seek a new and stronger site for his capital. He found it in *Samaria,* a hill with flat summit surrounded by other hills, which in those days must have been almost impregnable.

King Ahab was doubtless at Samaria when Elijah suddenly appeared before him. From Ahab's and Jezebel's wrath Elijah fled to the *Brook Cherith.* This brook was "before the Jordan," that is, east of Gilead. The traditional brook is the Wady Kelt. We know tradition is wrong here, for the Kelt is west of the Jordan, but the deep gorge through which this winter torrent flows would have been a fitting hiding-place for the fugitive. It is an awesome place. Scarcely any spot in Palestine seems more remote from all the world than this deep, rocky canyon. The huts of hermits now cling to its rocky sides, and here is the monastery of St. George to which the Greek Church banishes its monks for punishment.

Looking down into the Deep Gorge of the Brook Cherith

Elijah is called the *Tishbite,* from Thisbe, whose location in Gilead has not been discovered. *Gilead* lay on the east of the Jordan, from Moab on the south to the Yarmuk River on the north, but was a part of the Northern Kingdom. It is a land of broad plains and rocky hills.

From Gilead to *Zarephath* was a journey of ninety miles. Probably Elijah traveled at night up the Jordan valley and across the foothills of Lebanon to the Mediterranean. Zarephath (Sarepta, Lk. 4.26) was on the coast eight miles south of the great Phœnician city of *Sidon,* near the modern village of Sarafend. It would be the last place where Jezebel would look for him, because it was in her father's kingdom.

Assign paragraphs 85, 86, and 146 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

We are to have four lessons from the life of Elijah. The stories show how great an impression this forceful man made upon the minds of his contemporaries and their successors. Thoughtfully read the whole account in 2 Kings as though it were an unfamiliar tale. Note the rugged strength of the prophet, his scorn of ease, his perfect (single-minded) devotion to God, his hatred of idolatry, his sturdy spirit of defiance, his successful coping with the evil-tendencies of king and people. "The prophet of fire" he has been called. Then note how the time called for a red-hot man. "The shameless sin of the people had to be burned out by fervent heat. His scorching, radical methods were imperative, for no soft-spoken, mild-mannered man could have won his way in the face of such flagrant, impudent wrong-doing."

These are the lessons you will seek to impart, while you dwell as lightly as possible upon the miraculous elements of the stories, for they are relatively unimportant. "Were the agents of God's providential bounty the winged creatures of the sky or kindly humans who walked the earth?" The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail: was this written in the spirit of poetry, or were the meal and oil miraculously supplied?

Of one thing we are sure, a law was at work which runs through life, a law that is especially operative in our Christian experiences. And it is the glory of a Christian teacher's calling that this law never fails. His distribution, his bearing witness, of what he has experienced of God's goodness and love and power, is multiplied to his own good, for his efforts to carry spiritual knowledge to other lives as surely deepen his own spiritual life as the widow's distribution of food multiplied her own store.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
TRUSTING THE WORD OF JEHOVAH

Beginning the Lesson. Ahab was the seventh king of Israel. See the Historical Background. Ahab tried to worship Baal as well as Jehovah. He had a temple built for the worship of Baal (16.32) and the greater part of the people flocked there. He soon found that it was easier to admit the worship of Baal than it was to maintain the worship of Jehovah.

"An eclectic faith, then as now, was an impossibility. Attempts are still being made to establish eclectic religions. In some public buildings of China there may be seen three pictures, the central one of Confucius, that on the left (the place of honor) of Christ, and that on the right of Buddha. We remember also the proposal made in Japan to make a religion which would include the best elements in Christianity, Shintoism and Buddhism. All such attempts failed. There is a solitary throne in the heavens."

Elijah and Jezebel. See the Historical Background.

Elijah Lived by Faith. With some people providence is another word for getting what they ask for, and being able to complete their own plans. With many people providence has no meaning, or even existence, apart from the glad and successful passages of human experience. They find a friend, a way out of their difficulty, a solution of their personal problem; and lo! there is no doubt that providence had a hand in this. But hunger and pain and death; the hard way; gray days; black nights; lost powers; severed fellowships; surrendered purposes and broken hopes,—what do we say of these things? Hot and unwise words at times. The education of our faith is incomplete if we have not learned that there is a providence of loss, a ministry of failing and of fading things, a gift of emptiness. The material insecurities of life make for its spiritual establishment.

Providence is a progressive thing. It is a development. There is nothing final in it. That dwindling stream by which Elijah sat and mused is a true picture of the life of each one of us. "It came to pass that the brook dried up"—that is a history of our yesterday, and a prophecy of our morrows. I do not mean that these words tell the whole story of life, or even a very large part of it, for any one of us; but in some way or other we all have to learn the difference between trusting in the gift and trusting in the Giver. The gift may be for a while, but the Giver is the Eternal Love. The abiding thing in life is that word of the Lord that comes afresh into our hearts day by day.

Cherith was a difficult problem to Elijah until he got to Zarephath, and then it was all as clear as daylight. God's hard words are never his last words. The woe and the waste and the tears of life belong to the interlude and not to the finale.

Had Elijah been led straight to Zarephath he would have missed something that helped to make him a wiser prophet and a better man. He lived by faith at Cherith. And whensoever in your life and mine some spring of earthly and outward resource has dried up, it has been that we might learn that our help and hope are in God who made heaven and earth.—Condensed from The Pilgrim Church, by Percy C. Ainsworth.

It Was of God. In the year 1834, when cholera was raging in Stockholm, an artist was seized by the terrible disease. The crisis passed, he came again to his senses and wished to eat, but neither nurse nor physician came to his aid—they had both succumbed to the disease. The next day he was still hungrier, and was too weak to get up, or call for help, but he could pray earnestly that he who fed Elijah would feed him, too. An old woman opened the door, approached without saying a word, placed by his bed a little table on which there was food, and then went away as silently as she had come. The artist wondered whether it was an apparition or a reality, but he ate the food. Soon afterwards the woman returned and said the food was intended for the man who lived on the floor above, and she had made a mistake. "You have made no mistake," answered the artist, "it was truly God who sent you to me, for without you I would have starved here alone." After that he was cared for until restored to complete health.

Elijah Obeyed the Word of Jehovah. It is recorded of Elijah the Tishbite that "he went and did according unto the word of the Lord." This statement, made with reference to the temporary exile by the Brook Cherith, characterized the prevailing tendency of Elijah's whole life. He was a God-guided man, and therefore a successful prophet. Some, however, might exclaim, "It was worth while for Jehovah to direct an Elijah, but is it of any consequence to him to direct me?" Why not? Every link in a chain is important; no item in the huge "running account" of history is negligible. God never does his work by means of Elijahs alone. Even a Moses would amount to little without a host of smaller people to follow him, nor are the chidren to be forgotten in making up the personnel of the kingdom. That little lad whose lunch-basket was placed at the disposal of Jesus on the greensward by the banks of Galilee, when the loaves and fishes were multiplied, was as much a part of the Divine plan and led by the Lord's mysterious guiding, as were the ravens who fed Elijah. God has many agents and many expedients. When the brook dried up Elijah received orders to report at Zarephath, to a widow who would supply his commissariat, while he in turn, by the word of the Lord, replenished her larder. So it is found true throughout the whole course of history—those who "go and do" according to the word of God escape the sorest ills, and achieve the substantial ends of life, even if they do not dwell in king's houses, and fare sumptuously every day. The safest thing is daily to get orders from the wise Ruler in the heavens. But this ought to be added—those directions may seldom be made plain by literal language or blazoned sign in the skies, for generally this wise will of God can be recognized and interpreted only by much reading of the Scriptures, and earnest prayer for light and leading hour by hour.—Zion's Herald.

For Discussion. 1. Two kinds of "trouble makers"—those who stir things up because they want to lead, or want the excitement of a quarrel, and those who see a wrong and speak out against it. Modern troublers like Elijah, who will not let evil alone. In neighborhoods; politics; international relationships.

2. Prophets through whom God speaks today. Who can prophesy? He who himself obeys. The child who calls to his playmate, "Look out or you'll fall there!" fell, or escaped falling, there himself yesterday, and speaks from knowledge. Business ventures. Bringing up children. The nation's future. Listen to prophets and test them *by their own obedience.* Lincoln. Who today? Personal experience. Observation of many Ahabs.

3. "God was teaching Elijah a lesson not out of a dry book, but out of a dry brook." Lessons to be learned by scanning the lines of a dry brook. "The brook dries up and we begin to understand what other people suffer. The brook dries up and we enter more sympathetically into a sense of the world's

pain. The brook dries up and in the unexpected kindness called out by our dire necessity we put a new valuation upon the qualities of our fellow-beings" (Dean Brown).

4. Special Providences.

5. Elijah, the Militant Prophet. See chapter V of Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Dr. Robert W. Rogers.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What reason had Elijah to fear Ahab? 2. What reason had Ahab to fear Elijah? 3. Why did Ahab and the priests of Baal obey Elijah? 4. On what occasion did Joshua offer the people the alternative between serving Jehovah or serving false gods? (Josh. 24.15.) 5. What words of Jesus admonish one not to "limp between two sides"? 6. Why did Elijah pour water upon the altar, and where could he have obtained it in a time of drought? 7. When and how did Franklin call down fire from heaven? 8. What is your opinion of Elijah? 9. Into what music has this incident been woven? (Mendelssohn's Elijah.)

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JEHOVAH'S CHAMPION PRESERVED

Beginning the Lesson.

Who provideth for the raven his prey,
When his young ones cry unto God,
And wander for lack of food?

This question is asked in one of the Old Testament books (Job); what is your answer? Can you give an answer from Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them." At another time Jesus said that not a sparrow could fall to the ground without the heavenly Father's notice. The New Testament tells us that God cares for the birds. Here in the Old Testament we are told that he cared for one man through the help of the birds. What birds? What man? Where? Elijah was at the Brook Cherith in hiding: why?

Special Providences. Elijah was sent to a lonely ravine. Who would care for him there? But Elijah went in faith, and his life was sustained in a wonderful way. Then he was sent to Phœnicia. Who in that heathen land would care for a prophet of Israel? Surely not a widow who had reached the end of her resources! Elijah's trust in God was still undaunted, and the widow's jar of meal and cruse of oil failed not!

Was it only in olden times and among the Hebrew people that God showed his loving care? He does not work what we call miracles now to sustain the life of his people, but how many modern instances can be recalled in which the daily bread has come in such new and unexpected ways as to seem "miraculously" provided!

There is always a drought somewhere, and there are always hungry servants of God. Is it the drought only that abides, while the ministering ravens have vanished? We must not forget that all things are God's servants, and our daily bread, however it comes, is still supplied by Elijah's God. We can no more understand how the soil and the sun and the rain can multiply a grain of wheat into many golden ears than we can understand how the widow's jar of meal was multiplied so as to last many months. Is not one as much a miracle to us as the other? The Lord will provide.

During the massacre of Saint Bartholomew in the reign of Charles IX of France, pastor Merlin escaped to a farm near Paris and lay concealed for days in a hay-loft. At length he became so nearly starved that he thought he might as well perish by the sword as by hunger, and was about to venture from his hiding place when he saw a hen come in. He waited till she went on her way rejoicing and then found the egg she had laid, and this egg enabled him to keep in hiding two days longer. When he escaped he learned that had he started out earlier he would undoubtedly have been slain.

We call such an instance as this a special providence. We need the comforting assurance that special providences are not rare occurrences. "Mother, I think that God hears when we scrape the bottom of the barrel, for it never gets quite empty," said a small lad to his widowed mother who was courageously

caring for her little family, but was often anxiously wondering where the next meal would come from. The little comforter's trust in his heavenly Father's care cheered his mother's heart and spurred her on to successful effort. If our faith were but more simple, we should take him at his word.

Fed by Airplanes. Near Poncy a French battalion was surrounded by the Germans and had reached the time when all food and ammunition were exhausted. Just at this juncture French planes were seen flying low and soon loaves of bread were dropped, then cans of meat, and supplies of cartridges. The plight of the battalion had been suspected at headquarters. The men were thus enabled to hold out until reinforced by fresh troops.

Our Daily Dependence upon God. "The miracle of raining bread from heaven is that which God repeats to the world every day. The broad fact remains perpetually the same for all ages, though the outward manifestations may vary at different times. The one unchanging truth is that food comes to us from above and not from below. We look to God to give us our daily substance, and the means by which he provides for our wants are an ever-recurring miracle which compels our faith and fills our hearts with gratitude. Is the annual harvest any less marvelous because it occurs regularly, or because many secondary agencies are employed in its production? We plow and break up the ground to receive seed. But the seed comes from last year's gift, and when it is covered up again in the field it is left to God's care. We can only put materials in train for his working. It rests with him to send his rains or to withhold them, to order the sunshine or heat, to bless or blast the harvest. It is literally his opening his hand and putting into ours the food necessary for our sustenance. But for that gift, year by year renewed, man and beast would perish, and not even the industry of man would suffice to feed the world. We are accustomed to talk of a man making his living, but in truth no man makes the living; it is God who gives it to him."

Looking at the steam gauge of a Holly engine, Professor Gulliver noticed constant changes in the amount of steam. The engineer explained: "That is done by the people in the city. As they open their faucets to draw the water, the draft upon our fires is increased. As they close them, it is diminished. The engine is so adjusted as to respond perfectly to the needs of the people, be they great or small." And shall not God's heart respond to every need of his people?

Sentence Sermons to Remember. "The use of earthly goods for God's service may not be rewarded with the increase of them, but, if the barrel is not kept full of meal, the heart will be kept full of peace, which is better; no sacrifice for God is ever thrown away."

Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?—Jesus.

Is the cruse of comfort failing? Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and thy brother.
—Mrs. Charles.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.—Psalm 23.5.

The noble characters in each generation are the prophets of God.—Hamilton Wright Mabie.

Note-Book Work. The Life of Elijah: Scene I. Elijah's First Appearance in Israel.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire eighteenth chapter of First Kings. 2. How long did the drought last? 3. Tell about the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah. 4. Tell about Elijah's meeting with Ahab. 5. What was the test that Elijah demanded? 6. Why did the priests of Baal consent to the test? 7. Where is Mount Carmel? 8. What did the priests of Baal do and how long did they keep it up? 9. What did Elijah mockingly say to them? 10. What is said in James 5.17,18 about Elijah's prayers? 11. What happened after the people acknowledged God? 12. Describe Elijah's character as shown in this lesson.

ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE OF BAAL WORSHIP

Golden Text

This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. 1 John 5.4

LESSON 1 Kings 18.1-46 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 2.1-3, 7-12

REFERENCE MATERIAL Joshua 24.14-28; Ephesians 6.10-20

1 KINGS 18.20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. 22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. 24 And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down. 36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the *evening* oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. 37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ELIJAH'S MEETING WITH OBADIAH, verses 1-15. See the Historical Background.

II. ELIJAH'S MEETING WITH AHAB, verses 16-20. *Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?* was Ahab's angry greeting when he saw Elijah. Boldly Elijah returned the accusation, telling the king that it was he who was the real troubler of the nation, for he had *forsaken the commandments of Jehovah* and had *followed the Baalim,* the gods of Jezebel, his heathen wife. Then Elijah ordered the king to assemble on Mount Carmel the people and the prophets of Baal and of the Asherah. Ahab did the prophet's bidding.

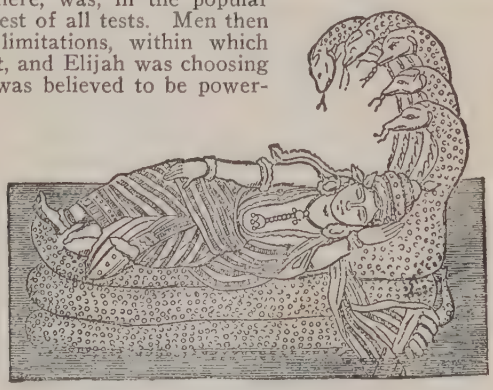
III. ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE TO THE BAAL WORSHIPPERS, verses 21-24. *How long go ye limping between the two sides?* Elijah sternly asked the people assembled on Mount Carmel. They were like a man who could not walk straight, but went first to one side and then to the other. A boy today would ask, "How long are you going to sit on the fence?" You must choose: which side will you join, God's or Baal's? *If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.* The people had no answer to give. "When duly examined the pretexts of indecision are absurd: unless we submit to the great appeal, nothing is left but speechlessness" (Watkinson). I am the only *prophet of Jehovah* left, Elijah continued, and there are *four-hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.* We will have a test. Let Baal's prophets bring two bullocks, and let them prepare one for sacrifice and I will prepare the other; *and call ye on the name of your God, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.* The people approved.

IV. THE VAIN EFFORTS OF THE PRIESTS OF BAAL, verses 25-29. An African witch doctor claimed that his fetish would protect him from arrows. A missionary took up a bow, fitted an arrow to it, walked off a short distance, and aimed at the African. In great alarm the latter cried out, "White man, what are you going to do?" "Let's try and see whether your fetish will protect you from the arrow," said the missionary. "Oh, no! white man, let's not try!" the African returned. No doubt the priests of Baal would have been glad to answer Elijah's challenge in a similar way, but the people had agreed to the proposal and they could not refuse to do their part. They prepared their sacrifice and *from morning until noon* they cried, *O Baal, hear us. And they leaped about the altar,* but there was no answer. Dancing accompanied by various bodily contortions was customary at such heathen sacrifices. At noon *Elijah mocked them, and said: Cry aloud;* perhaps your god is *musing,* or has gone *on a journey,* or he is asleep. Elijah's taunt urged the priests on to still greater frenzy. Frantically they kept up their cries, and gashed themselves with knives until the time of the evening sacrifice. *But there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regardeth.* "It is precisely so with every false creed, every false science, every false prophet today. There is nothing to show! All effort ends in silence. Prodigious exertions finish in prodigious emptiness" (Joseph Parker).

V. ELIJAH'S FAITH AND VICTORY, verses 30-39. Then Elijah called the people to him where he stood, the one against the many. Quietly he made his preparations. He repaired the altar; taking twelve stones he built it up, made a trench around it, piled on the wood and then laid upon it the slain bullock. Three times he had four jars of water poured upon the offering, till the trenches were filled. And then he called upon the Lord: *O let it be known this day,* he cried, *that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.* ("One man with God at his back, afraid of nothing, can work marvels.") *Hear me, O Jehovah, that this people may know that thou art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.* Then fell the fire of the Lord, the story tells us, and consumed offering and wood and stones and water. And the people fell on their faces crying, *Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Ahab gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel (verse 20). Mount Carmel was a very ancient site of the Baal worship, and Elijah, in suggesting that the test should be made there, was, in the popular belief, putting his God to the sorest of all tests. Men then believed the deities had local limitations, within which alone their power was of account, and Elijah was choosing foreign soil, on which Jehovah was believed to be powerless.—R. Bruce Taylor.



Vishnu Asleep

He is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, verse 27. The gods of Asiatic idolaters have different functions to fulfil, and require sleep and rest. Vishnu sleeps four months in the year. Buddha is represented in his temple as asleep, though his eyes are open; and according to many fables in the Pooranas the gods are often on journeys, expeditions.—Adam Clark, in Commentary.

When, after long pleadings and many offerings, an idol does not respond to the request of the worshipper, the people have been known to bore a hole in the back of the idol and place therein a live scorpion to wake up the idol.—Elliot I. Osgood, in Breaking Down Chinese Walls.

They cried aloud, and cut themselves, verse 28. One is naturally reminded of the modern dervishes and their practices. Van Lennep thus describes them:—

Howling dervishes sit upon the floor in a circle, and begin to pronounce ninety times each of the ninety-nine names by which they designate the Deity, bowing their head every time. They go on thus, becoming more and more excited, and bowing lower and lower, until they come to the last, and, in the opinion of the Moslems, the greatest name of all, "Hoo"; they then spring to their feet, and holding one another's hands, begin to dance in a circle in the most frantic manner, bending their bodies double, all the time crying in unison, "Hoo! Hoo!" They presently pull off their upper garments, leaving their chests bare. Someone outside the circle now strikes the timbrel, beating the time, and adding to the excitement; the devotees perspire at every pore; their cries grow frantic. They indulge in cutting only on special occasions, as, for instance, when a procession proceeds to the suburbs of a town to pray for rain, or for deliverance from some public calamity, when they sometimes become so exhausted with pain and loss of blood as to faint away.

Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering, verse 33. Elijah took great pains to prevent any suspicion that there was fire concealed beneath the altar. An ancient writer says: "I speak as an eye-witness. In the altars of the idols, there are beneath the altars channels, and underneath, a concealed pit: the deceivers enter these, and blow up a fire from beneath upon the altar, by which many are deceived and believe that the fire comes from heaven." In such deceptions ancient priests seem to have been adepts. At Pompeii a secret stairway has been disclosed from which pipes led to the back of the head of Isis; through these pipes the priests uttered their oracles.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was Jezebel, and what influence did she have over Ahab? Why did Elijah flee from their presence? How was his trust in God tested?

Elijah Sends Obadiah to Ahab. Three years had passed since Elijah told Ahab that there would be no rain in the kingdom till he said the word, when Ahab called Obadiah, his household manager, and bade him go in one direction, while he himself went in another, and seek for fountains of water for their perishing horses and mules.

After receiving God's promise of rain and the call to go and face the angry king, Elijah met Obadiah in the way and bade him announce his return to Ahab. Obadiah shrank in terror from the commission. Ahab had sought everywhere for Elijah, and should he, Obadiah, tell Ahab that he had found Elijah, and then Elijah would disappear before the king arrived to meet him? His own life would pay the forfeit for Elijah's second disappearance. All this Obadiah told Elijah, and added: "It was I who hid one hundred prophets of God in a cave and fed them when Jezebel had ordered them slain: and now you bid me go and tell Ahab that you are here, and he will slay me!" But when Elijah assured him that he, Elijah, would not disappear, Obadiah carried out his command. Ahab came to meet Elijah, and here our lesson begins.

Elijah Demands Loyalty to Jehovah. "Elijah could see no justification of Ahab's policy in tolerating within the land of Israel the worship of an alien God," writes Professor Kent. "His reasoning was simple and uncontrovertible. Israel was Jehovah's people, and Jehovah from the first had demanded their entire loyalty. To share that loyalty with another god was treason on the part of both king and people. Doubtless the prophet was also fully aware of the unspeakably corrupting moral influences of the Baal religion. For Ahab to concede to Elijah's demands would have meant not only severing foreign alliances but also throwing off the powerful influence of his own queen, Jezebel. Hence the close-drawn issue between king and prophet, and the necessity of Elijah's public appeal to the conscience of the people."

The End of the Drought. After the contest on Mount Carmel, Elijah took the initiative and ordered the prophets of Baal taken down to the Brook Kishon and slain. Elijah made Ahab eat and drink, for rain was coming, the long drought was soon to be ended. He ascended Mount Carmel and prayed, bidding his servant look towards the sea whence the rain would come. At last the servant reported a small cloud, the size of a man's hand. "Go and tell Ahab to make haste to get back to Jezreel, for the rain is coming," he commanded the servant. The heavens grew black with clouds and wind, the longed-

for rain came in torrents. In great exultation Elijah girded up his mantle and ran before Ahab's chariot across the plains even to Jezreel.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mount Carmel is a long ridge whose western end is a bold promontory projecting into the Mediterranean Sea. Its name means "the Garden," for it is "the first of Israel's hills to meet the rains, and they give it their best"; most of the hill in ancient times was cultivated. Its eastern bluff is 1750 feet above the sea. A series of rocky terraces leads down to the Plain of Esdraelon, which extends eastward to the Jordan, threaded at the time of our lesson by the white, sandy river-bed of the then waterless Kishon. On this Plain Elijah and Obadiah probably met. Mount Carmel is one of the distinctive features of Palestine, but its fame rests upon the story of the great contest fought upon it between Elijah, the prophet of Jehovah, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

The whole mountain is now called Mar Elias, the Mountain of Elijah. Tradition declares a cave toward the sea, beneath a great Carmelite Monastery, The Deir-el Mar Elyas, to have been the home of the stern prophet of reform. The scene of the contest is localized by tradition at the southeastern extremity of the ridge, and is called "The Place of Burning." Nearby is a spring which Tristam shows to be a never-failing one from the fact that its sides have shell molluscs of a species never found except where the water is perennial. The lower slopes of the mountain could accommodate several thousand people. From here to Jezreel is a distance of eighteen miles.

Assign ¶37, In the Master's Country.

TEACHER TRAINING THOUGHTS

Who has greater need of visual instruction or of teaching by example—kindergarten or advanced classes? Remember that, although your class is not at the kindergarten stage, examples are invaluable for their instruction, and spectacles are still useful. Witness the methods of advertisers, newspaper cartoonists, propagandists.

In your lessons constantly call for examples, and ask the following Sunday if other examples have been noticed or recalled. When pupils volunteer thoughts and citations on previous lessons that have occurred to them during the week, you have proof of being a successful teacher.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
MODERN EVILS: HOW TO FIGHT THEM

Beginning the Lesson. In the year 1832 there had long been drought in the land of the Betschuanen. Finally the people summoned a magician to come and make the rain fall. He postponed his coming until the wind had brought a heavy cloud. The rejoicing among the people was great. They praised the magician and his gods, and mocked the God of the missionaries Moffat and Hamilton, for he had not sent the rain. But the scene soon changed. The cloud passed without bringing the rain, and the heathen in their rage, despite the efforts of the missionaries, put the magician to death. All the particulars of the story of the contest on Mount Carmel are given to show that Elijah, unlike that unhappy magician, was acting in accordance with Jehovah's designs. In all the year's lessons there is no more spectacular scene than that enacted on Mount Carmel, and familiar as it is to us, we can profitably recall it and learn its lesson.

A Man versus a Multitude. Three things make the heroism of Elijah at Carmel one of the most notable events in the Old Testament. First, he stood absolutely alone. He had no open sympathisers at his side. He had no assurance of any secret sympathy on his behalf. Second, he issued the challenge. It is one thing when solitary to endure opposition, it is quite another to invite attack. To come out into the open, when one knows oneself entirely unsupported by one's fellowmen is much harder than to await their onslaught. Third, he acted with conspicuous fairness. He gave his opponents every opportunity.

Theirs was the first trial, his the prolonged waiting. They had every advantage, save the succor of God. The prophet towers above the centuries as we look back and see him standing there, facing the unwilling and truculent prophets of Baal, the hostile and suspicious king, the wavering and unreliable multitude. It was God and one man against the world.—R. C. Gillie.

Have Faith in the People. When Elijah makes his great appeal on Carmel, he assumes that there is an inherent faculty in mankind to distinguish between right and wrong. He believes that the mass of mankind, once brought face to face with supreme moral issues, will choose the right, and this is the essential ground of all faith in democracy. The true democrat is he who believes that the moral intuitions of mankind are sound, and will, in the long run, always give their sanction to the principles of right and justice. The issues may be confused. Politicians who have their own ends to serve, may go up and down a land wilfully confusing those issues; they may exhaust themselves in lying casuistries and may seem to carry opinion with them; but if men once have a true chance to comprehend the truth they will be found upon the side of truth. Why appeal to the people, if you don't believe that? What folly for Lincoln to put his case to the challenge of prolonged public debate unless he believed that there was a solid good sense in the multitude, which could perceive his reasons and endorse the justice of his conclusions, if once they were enabled to grasp them? And it is so Elijah argues. He appeals from a corrupt court, a time-serving oligarchy, a debased priesthood, to the common people. He challenges the inherent sense of right in the human heart. "If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."—From an Address by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

No Compromise. The temptation of the prophet is compromise. Did not Wilberforce feel that temptation when a friend laid his hand upon his arm, and pointed him to a cross, saying, "That is what happens to men who endeavor to reform society as you are now doing"? Did not Luther feel it through all that long and splendid day when all the powers that were, urged him at first in friendship and at last in menace to withdraw his theses, until in the end he cried, "Here I take my stand. I can do no other thing"? Does not the statesman feel it when he is told he will wreck his party by persisting in impracticable ideals of righteousness; and the writer when the publishers and critics tell him that he must modify his views if he would turn hostility and indifference into fame and admiration? Do not we, who live ordinary and unnoticeable lives, feel it when we are warned that certain customs of trade and society must be obeyed if we would attain a moderate prosperity, but that instant and continuous adversity awaits us if they be disregarded? And there is always a chance that we may be wrong. There are always four hundred false prophets to one true prophet. There is always a kind of authority in numbers. But it is not thus that the great makers of history have argued. It was not thus that Palisay spoke to Henry III of France, when the king told him that he would be compelled to send him to the stake if he did not renounce his faith: "Sire," said the old man, "you have expressed pity for me; but I pity the king who can say, 'I am compelled.'" It was not thus, in our own times, that John Brown reasoned when he attempted valiantly and vainly to free the slaves of Virginia, whom neither the law nor the gospel would liberate. And although for us there may be no supreme hour when liberty and truth speak through our lips for the salvation of nations, yet to the humblest man there do come occasions when Truth offers us the Crown of Thorns and Lies the Crown of God; and in such hours we can only save our souls by learning to say with Micaiah, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."—Dr. W. J. Dawson, in a Recent Sermon.

Lincoln's Memorable Words which Tell us How to Fight Evils. Having thus chosen our course, without guile and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God and go forward without fear and with manly hearts.

The purposes of the Almighty are perfect and must prevail.

Let no one falter who thinks he is right.

Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in his own good time, will give us the rightful result.

I have felt his hand upon me in great trials, and submitted to his guidance, and I trust that as he shall further open the way I will be ready to walk therein, relying on his help and trusting in his goodness.

The Pragmatic Test. The further lesson here portrayed in dramatic fashion is that all claims must at last be brought to the test of accomplishment. There is no difference in belief worth talking about which does not make a difference when brought to the test of experience. The claims must vindicate themselves in the eye of an onlooking multitude by producing moral renewal.

The scene on Carmel may be regarded as a poetic representation of the wider test that had been taking place in the lives of the respective adherents of Baal and Jehovah. In the one case moral feebleness and corruption were the outcome of false worship; in the other, moral health was the fruitage of the worship of the living God. Let the Lord who answers by these signs be God!

Let the pragmatic test be applied today to rival claimants for our adherence. Let the religion which answers by renewed hearts, by loftier moral purpose, by increased spiritual vigor, by finer forms of usefulness stand supreme! Let paganism and infidelity cease plying us with cleverly devised theories—let them make a show of moral results consequent upon their interpretation of the supreme verities and then we shall have something to speak to and not a mere array of idle talk.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Story Books of the Early Hebrews.

How to Change Men and Nations. The story of Elijah's experience at Horeb (our lesson next week) has particular meaning for Christian people and reformers just now. The prophet had believed in force to effect conversions: now force is tried upon him, and he does not respond to it, but his heart opens to a sound of gentle stillness. And then God explains to him that the "seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal" were left to do his work quietly and penetratively. Men would be conquered, not coercively but persuasively: by the triumph of truth and not of force. We need to learn this lesson today. Men still believe in the power of repression. Evil is to be slain by force. It is true that we must always leave room for force. It is one of God's weapons. The Lord himself used a whip of small cords. Some of our social evils need not less than strangling. Yet for *permanent conversion* this is not sufficient. Evil crushed here will break out anew there. No change in men or in nations can be permanent unless the conscience is touched and the heart changed. It is the voice of God that convinces. And the business of the seven thousand is ever to go on bearing their witness to God and truth. It is through them that the best work is always done.—Editorial in The Christian.

For Discussion. 1. One against many. The Republican Party began with Lincoln and two others. The beginning of the Temperance Reform; of Woman Suffrage. If all reforms start thus, are all movements that so start, reforms? Present day unpopular causes. When the one against the many is seen to be courageous, how does opinion turn? Do we admire him even though he is in the wrong? Students of Milton, even though they start with a prejudice against Satan, admire him as they read Milton's work. Recall Macaulay's poem of Horatius at the Bridge; Telemachus.

2. "Then conquer we must,
For our cause it is just."

Must *we* conquer, or must the *cause* conquer?

3. The use of sarcasm. To what extent may one follow the example of Elijah? "Sarcasm is a kind of intellectual tabasco sauce to be used sparingly by wise reformers."

4. Elijah the reformer of Samaria and Savonarola the reformer of Florence.

5. Shall we pray for rain? See page 781, The Outlook, Aug. 1, 1914.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What must Elijah have expected after his victory on Carmel? 2. What happened at the close of the contest? 3. What effect did Ahab's report have upon Jezebel? 4. Was it cowardly in Elijah to flee? 5. How do you reconcile Elijah's courage on Carmel with his fear of Jezebel? 6. What reasons had Elijah for being discouraged? 7. What means did God employ to restore his spirit? 8. When was Moses in despair, and what did he say? (Num. 11.10-17). 9. How does Job express his despair? (Job 6.8-10). 10. When did John the Baptist feel that his life had been in vain? 11. What is the cure for despondency? 12. How were the Books of Kings and Chronicles written?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JEHOVAH'S CHAMPION VICTORIOUS

Beginning the Lesson. Day after day, till the weeks grew into months, the sky in Ahab's realm glowed like a furnace, and the earth was parched into hot dust and all the green things in the fields withered, and all living creatures went athirst and hungry. There was one word in every heart, and that word was "famine." Everything else was forgotten. Everybody prayed for rain.

"The first thing, if you are to teach anybody is to get attention. Even God must have attention. And sometimes it takes a strange sight—indeed, sometimes it takes a tragedy or a famine to get men to look in God's direction, and to listen to his voice. It did here."

(By questions recall the situation, the beginning and growth of idolatry in Israel, the crisis, the appearance of Elijah, his declaration that as punishment there should be no rain, his flight to Cherith, stay in Zarephath, and the reasons for his reappearing in his own country. Ask the pupil to whom last week you especially assigned the question, to describe the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah. Call upon another pupil to tell about the meeting between Elijah and Ahab. Have Mount Carmel located.)

How Long Go ye Limping between the Two Sides? A native South Sea Island teacher gave a striking illustration of this text which he culled from the local mythology. A bird on Nguna was thirsty and wanted water. Hearing the sound of a running stream on Efate, it flew away in that direction. While flying, it caught the sound of running water from another direction, and at once turned on that course. After flying for some distance, the stream on Efate again attracted its attention, and the poor bird, with the sound of both streams in its ears, was unable to determine which one to select. At length, tortured by thirst and overcome with exhaustion, it fell dead between the two streams!

The Reality of Spiritual Forces. The contrast between the scenes at the two altars was striking. On one side four hundred and fifty priests of Baal; on the other, Elijah standing alone. On one side the well-dressed objects of the royal favor; on the other, the Tishbite, half naked, with a leather girdle about his loins. On one side the fat, sleek idolaters fed from Jezebel's table; on the other, Elijah claiming his scanty fare from the ravens, gaunt, thin, shaggy as a Nazarite.

But on one side there was nothing but an empty, useless idol to serve as the center of a misguided devotion, patronized though it was by an apostate king and queen. On the other side was the living God having at his command unseen legions of spiritual forces mightier by far than all the armies of earth. When you add in the things which were not seen by careless eyes, the situation wears another look.

The priests of Baal carried forward a pathetic exhibition of a desperate earnestness. It was a strange, wild scene, the false priests smeared with their own blood, rending the air with frenzied shouts, and imploring the empty idol to reveal a power which was not there. Their frantic endeavors availed nothing —the sun moved on its course until the day was done and their opportunity was gone.

The hour had come for Elijah to put to the test his claims on behalf of the living God. "Come near to me," he said, and the people drew up with eager attention. Then he repaired the altar, taking twelve stones according to the number of the tribes. His act was symbolic of the devotion of a united nation seeking the God of their fathers. It was as if an American in the darkest days of the Civil War had planted a flag beside his altar with its separate star for every state in the Union, though some of them were in the act of falling away. Elijah had a vision of a reunited Israel calling upon the name of the God of Abraham.

He cut the bullock in pieces and laid them on the wood. He drenched the altar with water that all chance of fraud might be removed. Then in the quiet of that evening hour as the solemn shadow of Carmel stretched across the Plain of Esdraelon, he offered his fervent, effectual prayer. There was no ranting, no leaping, no cutting himself with knives, but there was faith and hope and love. He was calm and confident, for he prayed to the living God.

"Then the fire of Jehovah fell," we read, "and consumed the burnt offering."

"When the people saw it they fell on their faces. They cried, Jehovah, he is God, Jehovah, he is God." The God of Israel had answered by definite results, and the victory over an empty idolatry was complete. The multitude on the mountain side was lifted into a new consciousness of the reality of spiritual forces.—Condensed from The Story Books of the Early Hebrews, by Dean Charles R. Brown.

Another Victorious Champion of Jehovah. Once the natives of the Hawaiian Islands had a dread goddess whom they called Pele. She dwelt in the fiery part of the Volcano Kilauea, and her power was great and terrible. The Princess Kapiolani arranged a test, that she might prove to her people that Pele was powerless. She made a pilgrimage of a hundred miles, most of the way on foot, to the great crater. There she was met by a missionary who had walked barefoot (for he had no shoes) from Hilo, twenty-five miles away. The two then descended from the rim to the "black rock." There they were within sight and hearing of some eighty watching natives, and the Princess said to them: "The Lord is my God. He kindled these fires. I fear not Pele. If I perish from the anger of Pele, you may fear the power of Pele. If I do not perish, all the gods of Hawaii are vain." The terrified people expected to see the fire leap upon her for thus defying their goddess, but she stood there calmly, sang a hymn of praise, and then returned to them unharmed. Her test did much to convince the Hawaiians that their gods were vain, and that "Jehovah, he is God," even as Elijah's test convinced the Israelites.

Jehovah, He is God. The natives of the New Hebrides Islands were at first very hostile to their missionary, the Rev. John G. Paton. They set fire to the church and then to the reed fence around his house. Paton and his friends knew that the savages intended to kill them should they attempt to make their escape after their building was afire. The intrepid missionary went out and began putting out the fire. What followed he tells. "The savages yelled in rage and urged each other to strike the first blow, but the Invisible One restrained them. I stood invulnerable beneath his invisible shield, and succeeded in rolling back the tide of flame from our dwelling house. At this dread moment occurred an incident which my readers may explain as they like, but which I trace directly to the interposition of my God. A rushing and roaring sound came from the south, like the noise of a mighty engine or of muttering thunder. Every head was instinctively turned in that direction, and they knew from previous experience that it was one of their awful tornadoes of wind and rain. The mighty roaring of the wind, the black cloud pouring down unceasing torrents, and the whole surroundings awed these savages into silence. Some began to withdraw from the scene; all lowered their weapons of war and several, terror-stricken, exclaimed: 'That is Jehovah's rain. Truly, their Jehovah God is fighting for them and helping them. Let us away!' A panic seized upon them. They threw away their remaining torches. In a few minutes they had all disappeared in the bush, and I was left alone, praising God for his marvelous works."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. One man with God at his back, who fears nothing, can work marvels.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

A false face, a false character, a false credit, a false religion, will always prove valueless in the day of testing and scrutiny.—Dr. David Gregg.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. In your life of Elijah write II. Elijah's Challenge of Baal Worship. Write your account in three scenes: Scene 1, Elijah's Interview with Obadiah; Scene 2, Elijah's Interview with Ahab; Scene 3, The Contest on Mount Carmel.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What earlier deed of Jezebel's gave Elijah cause to fear her wrath? (1 K. 18.3). 2. Where is Horeb? 3. What great events had happened there? (Ex. 3.19). 4. Why was Elijah so different at Mount Carmel and at Mount Horeb? 5. What did Elijah mean by saying that he was *jealous for* God? 6. What great disappointments have you had? 7. What did you do? 8. Are you ever gloomy and despondent? 9. How can you overcome such moods? 10. How was Elijah convinced that God's cause would not fail? 11. What does the contrast between the wind and earthquake and fire on the one hand, and the still small voice on the other, teach? 12. What do we call the still, small voice that speaks to us? 13. Read Moses's experience in Ex. 32 and 33, and compare it with Elijah's at Horeb.

ELIJAH'S FLIGHT AND RETURN

Golden Text

I waited patiently for Jehovah;
And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. Psalm 40.1

LESSON 1 Kings 19.1-21 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 42.6-11
REFERENCE MATERIAL Ezekiel 2.1-7; Acts 16.6-10; 18.1-11

1 KINGS 19.9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: 12 and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet will I leave *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ELIJAH'S FLIGHT TO HOREB, verses 1-8. From Mount Carmel Ahab returned to his palace at Jezreel and told Queen Jezebel all that Elijah had done on the mount, and how he had slain the prophets of Baal. At once Jezebel dispatched a messenger to Elijah to tell him that the gods might slay her if she did not have him put to death within a day. The prophet had boldly confronted Ahab and all the priests of Baal, and had expected that after the victory on Carmel Ahab would put down the worship of Baal. When he learned that Jezebel was not vanquished, that she was still in control of Ahab and of Samaria, he trembled for his own life and fled to Beersheba, and then on into the desert. Under the shade of a juniper tree he sat down in the grip of despair. *It is enough*, he cried; *now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. He lay down and slept*, and then, the record says, *an angel came to him and said, Arise and eat.* "Elijah had been neglecting common things. He had forgotten to eat. He was exhausted. And the good angel brought him into remembrance of the common meal. And he ate, and his spirit came back into him. And so it is with thee and me. Often physical exhaustion interferes with our judgment, and we see things out of shape, or upside down, and we sit under a juniper tree in despair. Arise and eat!" (Jowett). Rested and strengthened by sleep and food, Elijah continued his journey to Horeb, the mount where Moses had communed with God amid fire and tempest and thick darkness. "Elijah was obeying the same impulse as might send an American to Plymouth Rock. The restorer of the Law and Religion of Israel might well seek renewed strength in the place where that Law and Religion had first

been given" (Maclaren). "So God takes us in despondency to places where men of old have been blessed. We may find, for instances, in some book a spiritual experience reproduced" (R. Bruce Taylor).

II. ELIJAH'S LAMENT AT HOREB, verses 9,10. The reaction had come, and Elijah must have been physically exhausted. He had endured a great strain on Carmel; he had run before Ahab's chariot eighteen miles from Carmel to Jezreel: he had had a journey of ninety-five miles in his flight to Beersheba: he had had a day's journey into the wilderness, and then perhaps one hundred and eighty miles more to Horeb. Elijah was depressed in spirit over Jezebel's threat: he was alone, and he had nothing to do. Moreover, it seemed to him that he had failed in his attempt to save the nation.

While in a cave on the mountain he was made aware of "God's listening ear and sympathizing heart." *What doest thou here, Elijah?* was the sharp, searching question that came to his heart. It recalls Mrs. Browning's words: "Here's God down on us! What are you about?" Did Elijah answer that he had run away from Jezebel? Possibly he had thought of giving up his commission on *the mount of God,* for he answered, *I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts.* Our words *jealous* and *zeal* are kindred in origin, and may be traced back to the Greek word which means *boiling.* To be jealous for someone is to be burning with zeal for that one's interests. Elijah's entire ministry is marked by his zeal for God. "And to what purpose, he would say, when God is so remiss concerning his own honor?" (Wood). *For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword,* declared Elijah, who thought, therefore, that all hope of reformation was lost, as the prophets were the only ones who could bring about a change for the better. And then he concluded his lament with these words: *And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* "Among the faithless, faithful only he" (Milton). Are there not occasions when each of us feels that, as the French express it, *On n'a que soi*—One only has oneself?

III. GOD TEACHES ELIJAH A GREAT LESSON, verses 11-14. *Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah.* "We may be embittered by the friction of life, but if we lift our eyes to the hills and let the beauty of the Lord our God sweep through us, all is changed. The jarred and impoverished self is lost, and comes back to us purified, all its stains removed by the Divine Spirit" (Frank Johnson). *And, behold, Jehovah passed by.* In the symbols of his power—a wind that hurled down the rocks; a mighty earthquake, and flashing lightning. Compare the Theophany of Ex. 33.18-23; 34.5,6. *But Jehovah was not in the wind . . . not in the earthquake.* The lesson Elijah was thus taught was that when the great contests had failed of result, gentle and long-continued means would prevail: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts," Zech. 4.6. Storm and earthquake and lightning might have been expressly sent at this time by God as revelations to Elijah of himself: or the natural coming of these forces might have set the prophet to thinking about God's ways of working, and thus it was by Divine suggestion that God worked.

And after the fire a still small voice. Hebrew, *a sound of gentle stillness,* RVm. Compare Job 4.16: "There was silence, and I heard a voice." Elijah's harsh methods, deeds of violence, were not God's methods. God reveals himself in deeds of tolerance and kindness. A change came over his turbulent mood; reverently *he wrapped his face in his mantle*—so Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God, Ex. 3.6—and came to *the entrance of the cave.* He left his dismal cave, his self-delusion, self-conceit, and apprehension—and stood before God—surveyed the whole situation. (The question and answer of verses 9 and 10 are here repeated.)

III. GOD TEACHES ELIJAH ANOTHER GREAT LESSON, verses 15-18. God recommissioned Elijah: the post he had thought to lay down still awaited him. *And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way* back to Israel by way of *the wilderness of Damascus.* He had wandered from his task. So Keble:—

> Perhaps our God may of our conscience ask,
> What doest thou here, frail wanderer from thy task!

Go: this is the word for all discouraged ones. Get to work, do something for others, fill your mind and heart so full of work for others that there is not room

for discouragement. Victory in Jehovah's warfare is attained not by force but by long-continued effort and by gentler means. *Anoint Hazael,* the general of Benhadad, who was then king of Syria, *to be king over Syria; and Jehu,* the son of Jehoshaphat, an officer at this time in Ahab's army, *to be king over Israel; and Elisha* to be your successor: they shall give permanence to your work and fulfil my decrees. Elijah had thought himself necessary to the work of reformation; he learned that "God buries the workmen, but the work goes on"; that it would take time to abolish idolatry;—he could not expect it to be accomplished in his own life time.

Him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. "Hazael, King of Syria; Jehu, the rude captain; and Elisha, the young farmer: each was as different as possible from the others, yet each had his special sphere in dealing with the idolatries and impurities that were destroying the chosen race. God's nets are not all constructed with the same size of meshes. Men may escape some of the bigger ones, who will be caught by the smaller ones. But God so orders the lives of men that once at least each encounters a mesh that cannot be evaded" (F. B. Meyer). "Elisha can hardly be said to have slain any. He lived on the whole in friendship with the kings both of Israel and of Aram, and in peace and honor in the cities. But the general idea seems to be that he would carry on the mission of Elijah alike for the guidance and the heaven-directed punishments of the kings and nations, and that the famines, raids, and humiliations which rendered his nation miserable under the sons of Ahab should be elements of his sacred mission" (Farrar).

Think not that you alone have remained true to me, for there are *seven thousand in Israel* who have not worshipped Baal. Seven thousand is a round number which expresses "the sacredness as well as the numerousness of the elect." Have we learned that there are always more good people than we think there are?

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Every mouth that hath not kissed him, verse 18. Kissing the image of Baal was an act of worship (1 K. 19.18), much as Romanists now kiss the Pope's toe, or the toe of the bronze image of Jupiter which does duty for St. Peter in the church of St. Peter's at Rome, to signify his superiority over any temporal sovereign whose hand is kissed.—H. B. Tristram, in Eastern Customs.

The Mohammedans, on beginning their prayers, bring their thumbs together, kissing them three times. They cannot kiss the hand of the unseen God in token of lowly submission, so kiss their own hand instead.—Henry A. Harper.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Jezreel, in Samaria, Elijah went to *Beersheba* on the southern frontier of the kingdom of Judah, which was a sanctuary as late as the eighth century, Amos 5.5. It is on the border of the desert and is noted for its wells. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had made their home here.

Beersheba was on the great road between Canaan and Egypt. A day's journey brought Elijah through the Negeb, or the South Land, to the wilderness of Paran, where he rested and then continued his journey to *Horeb.* Horeb is the general name given to the group of mountains in the southern part of the Sinaitic peninsula which includes Mount Sinai. "Here in the heart of nature's profoundest solitude, amid scenery unsurpassed for wild and stern grandeur, history, tradition, and geography have combined to locate Sinai, the Mount of the Lord, and all those wondrous events enacted round it."

Location of Sinai

Jebel Musa (The Mount of Moses) rises precipitously to a height of 7,363 feet. From the Monastery of St. Catherine on its northern slope three thousand stone steps, which were cut thirteen hundred years ago for the use of pilgrims, lead to the summit. Four hundred feet from the summit is the Chapel of Elijah, "where," writes Dr. E. W. Bishop, "there is a kind of hollow amphitheater, and it requires no stretch of the imagination to see the weary prophet taking refuge under the superincumbent rocks while all the fury of a mountain thunder storm played round

him; and then as it passed by, hushing itself, as a thunder storm always hushes itself, into a vast silence thrice accentuated in that desolate spot, one can see the old hero emerging from under the dripping rocks and listening to the still small voice."

The *wilderness of Damascus,* verse 15, is the Syrian desert in which Damascus is situated. A few miles from Damascus a synagogue marks the spot where according to tradition Elijah anointed Elisha. *Abelmeholah,* whence Elisha came, was on the Jordan plain perhaps ten miles south of Bethshan.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Lead your pupils to an understanding of Elijah's attitude by questions:—

What motives have you for coming to Sunday-School? Which is the highest of these motives? Which is the lowest? Give other examples of mixed motives from your own or others' actions.

What is a hypocrite? Can one be an unconscious hypocrite? We call a conscious hypocrite a Pecksniff or a Uriah Heep, after the characters in Dickens's Martin Chuzzlewit and David Copperfield. What other examples can you cite? Was Jeroboam a hypocrite? (Review our first lesson and show that he probably had mixed motives. Read carefully paragraphs 7 and 8, page 16 of our Introduction.)

What value is there in examining your own motives? Recall the most generous, the bravest, things you have done. Were your motives pure, or mixed? Whatever you do from mixed motives, as giving money to a good cause and to be seen of men, though others may think you generous, be sure that God will see the mean motive. When God questioned Elijah, he was teaching Elijah self-examination. He was made to realize the complexity of his motives by object lessons. Do you use your reason to decide what you will do, or to excuse what you do?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
FINDING AND FINISHING OUR TASK

Beginning the Lesson. It has been observed of the holy men of Scripture that their most signal failures took place in those points of character for which they were remarkable in excellence. Moses was the meekest of men, but it was Moses who "Spake unadvisedly with his lips." St. John was the apostle of charity; yet he is the very type to us of religious intolerance, in his desire to call down fire from heaven. St. Peter is proverbially the apostle of impetuous intrepidity, yet twice he proved a craven. If there were anything for which Elijah is remarkable, we should say it was superiority to human weakness. Like John the Baptist, he dared to arraign and rebuke his sovereign: like the commander who cuts down the bridge behind him, leaving himself no alternative but death or victory, he taunted his adversaries, the priests of Baal, on Mount Carmel, making them gnash their teeth and cut themselves with knives, but at the same time insuring for himself a terrible end, in case of failure, from his exasperated foes. And again, in his last hour, when he was on his way to a strange and unprecedented departure from this world—when the whirlwind and flame and chariot were ready—he asked for no human companionship. In harmony with the rest of his lonely, severe character, he desired to meet his Creator alone. Now it was this man—so stern, so iron, so independent, so above all human weakness—of whom it was recorded that in his trial-hour he gave way to a fit of petulance and querulous despondency to which there is scarcely found a parallel.—Frederick W. Robertson.

Why Elijah was Despondent about his Task. Many causes united to throw Elijah into the depths of despair. There was the reaction that inevitably follows moments of great exaltation. Then his nerves were overwrought, his physical nature was at a low ebb. The fifteen mile run to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot had exhausted him. Now he was utterly alone. From a period of intense, exciting activity he had come to one of complete idleness. But the strongest contributing cause lay in his zeal for Jehovah. He was bitterly disappointed. His victory seemed defeat. God's cause would never prosper; he had labored in vain. And with the thought of the defeated cause came the loss of confidence in himself as the champion of that cause. "I am not better than my fathers," he cried, "take away my life."

Other Men who were to Blame for Elijah's Attitude. A messenger of the Lord came to this discouraged man and fed him. He told him to lie down and get a good night's sleep. In the freshness of the following morning at the beginning of a new day, he assured the tired prophet that there were seven thousand people in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. He then told Elijah to stand up and do his duty before God and man.

All this was reassuring, but what were those seven thousand people doing that day when Elijah stood on Mount Carmel alone, fighting the battle of righteousness? "The priests of Baal are four hundred and fifty men, and I only remain a prophet of Jehovah." He had around him a company of people halting between two opinions. They were trying to carry water on both shoulders. They were not of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal! But why were not some of those seven thousand reserves on hand? If there had been a dozen of them, or even three of them, like Moses, Aaron and Hur, on some point of rocks, holding aloft their sympathetic interest in the struggle, Elijah might not have been under the juniper tree.

Many a man fighting hard for a principle in politics or standing strongly for finer methods in commercial life goes down in defeat for the lack of just such openly and loyally expressed sympathy. The minister of Christ seeking out some man who is being worsted in the moral struggle often sees on that face a look of gratitude and, alas, of surprise. The man will say with a tremor in his voice, "I did not suppose anybody cared whether I went to the devil or not." The young fellow fighting with all his might to keep his life clean in the face of temptation, struggling to maintain his honesty where he sees all kinds of successful stealing in operation, striving to keep his Christian faith in the presence of intellectual difficulties which seem to be tearing it to piecess, needs tremendously the presence and help of sympathetic friends. If there are three friends in sight, holding up their hands as a visible expression of their interest, he will be nerved for the struggle and aided toward victory. And there are enough of us to go around—there are enough to furnish three such friends for every fight that is on.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Quest of Life.

Other Despondent Men. Is there any other mood so common as disheartenment? Hours of depression overcome even the strongest natures at times. After his most successful battles Napoleon was always overmastered by melancholy. It was in one of his deep fits of depression that Luther threw the ink bottle at an imaginary devil. "I cannot win Scotland, let me die!" exclaimed that indomitable Scottish reformer, John Knox. "I came near doing a dreadful thing the other day," Phillips Brooks once confessed, referring to a time of depression. "I was in East Boston, and I suddenly felt as if I must get away from everything. I went to the Cunard dock and asked if the steamer had sailed. She had been gone an hour. I believe if she had been still there, I should have absconded." If these giants faint by the way, what of the rank and file of humankind?

The Right Attitude towards One's Task. How was Elijah rescued from his pessimistic gloom? The word came unto Elijah, "Go stand on the mount before the Lord!" Think of that word spoken to a man in a cave! He was commanded to leave his cave and take to the mountain! And what was the significance of the command? It means this. Change your station! Alter your point of view! Get mountain vision—height, and breadth, and comprehension! Leave the cave, with its low and dripping roof, and get out under God's great skies, and lift your eyes to that blue heaven above us bent. Let your soul climb up to the place where it has big views, long views, views in which the fretting inch is lost in the large and inspiring landscape. "Go stand on the mount before the Lord!" Yes, before the Lord! The spiritual must be comprehended in the vision. Think of that little man Elijah, crouching in his little cave, wailing, "I, even I only, am left," now going to stand on the mountain before the Lord, surveying the utter vastness of things, in which the inch is swallowed up in the infinite, and our little self is found to be vitally related to the eternal life and love!—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Life is for Doing. God made Elijah feel the earnestness of life. What *doest* thou here, Elijah? Life is for doing. A prophet's life for nobler doing—and the prophet was not doing, but moaning.

Such a voice repeats itself to all of us, rousing us from our lethargy, or our despondency, or our protracted leisure. "What doest thou here?" here in this

short life. There is work to be done—evil to be put down—God's Church purified—good men encouraged—doubting men directed—a country to be saved—time going—life a dream—eternity long—one chance and but one forever. What *doest thou* here?

Then he went on farther. "Arise, go on thy way." That speaks to us: on thy way. Be up and doing; fill up every hour, leaving no crevice or craving for a remorse, or a repentance to creep through afterwards. Let not the mind brood on self; save it from speculation, from those stagnant moments in which the awful teachings of the spirit grope into the unfathomable unknown, and the heart torments itself with questions which are insoluble except to an active life. For the awful Future becomes intelligible only in the light of a felt and active Present. Go, return on thy way if thou art desponding—*on thy way*, health of spirit will return.—Frederick W. Robertson, Sermons.

Others May Finish your Task.

Back then, complainer; loathe thy life no more,
Nor deem thyself upon a desert shore,
Because the rocks the nearer prospect close.
Yet in fallen Israel are there hearts and eyes
That day by day in prayer like thine arise,
Thou knowest them not, but their Creator knows.

Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast
Thy bread upon the waters, sure at last
In joy to find it after many days.
The work be thine, the fruit thy children's part:
Choose to believe, not see: sight tempts the heart
From closer walking in true Gospel ways.—Keble.

For Discussion. 1. The sin of overdoing. The indulgence of body over mind and of mind over body, and our responsibility for the health of each. Homekeepers are prone to act like Elijah when at sixty years of age he ran eighteen miles and then went off without his dinner and sat down in the wilderness and grieved. Apply this to examples you have seen and to yourself. Many people are proud of the sin of overdoing.

2. Elijah's loneliness. See chapter VII of The Divine Challenge, by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

3. Mixed motives. See Teacher-Training Thoughts. Parents are prone to do what Elijah did in setting forth motives. "I did thus for him. See how I am requited." Did you do it solely for his best good? What about your own pride? Your desire to rule? Your pleasure? Are the old or the young the more likely to be actuated by mixed motives?

4. Paul the Undiscourageable contrasted with Elijah the Discourageable. The Order of the Juniper Tree. See Chapter XXXI of Studies in Christian Character, by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

5. A hard task—anointing your successor. Examples: mothers-in-law, men who induct their sons into their businesses, retiring presidents of clubs. Give other examples. Retiring gracefully. Criticising successors. If you have had a hand in unseating any head of a household, or business, or institution, continue to do him reverence and at least ask his advice. Cite examples. Why do retired people so often die apparently without cause?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What prophet and judge warned the people that their king would take away their vineyards, and what led him to tell them this? 2. What characteristics has Ahab shown in the preceding history? 3. What new traits does he show in this lesson? 4. Is Jeremiah's word about covetousness (Jer. 6.13) true today? 5. Why did Naboth refuse the king's offer? 6. Was Ahab responsible for Jezebel's deed? 7. Was he as guilty as Jezebel? 8. Which of Ahab's sins—permitting Baal worship or the murder of Naboth—would arouse greater condemnation among his people? Why? 9. What prompted Ahab to call Elijah his enemy? 10. Compare Nathan's rebuke of David with Elijah's rebuke of Ahab. 11. Is sin always found out? 12. How did Ahab meet his death? (1 K. 22.34,38). 13. How did Jezebel (2 K. 9.30-37). 14. How do the Books of Kings and Chronicles differ in purpose from modern historical books?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JEHOVAH'S CHAMPION ENCOURAGED

Beginning the Lesson. "Africa is a land of extremes. It boasts the biggest swamp and the greatest desert. At one period of the year people seldom get dry, and at another they die of thirst. The inky blackness which sometimes covers the usually brilliant blue sky is such as one never sees in a temperate zone. It is alive with giant game and microscopic insects. It has the brightest days and darkest nights. It contains the smallest people (the Pigmies) and the tallest people (the Dinkas). In it meet the oldest civilization and the most uncivilized savages."

Dr. Watkinson gives the quotation and comments: "Is not Africa a picture of the tremendous contrasts of human circumstances and experience? In a day, as it were, there met in the life of Elijah the grandest triumph and the deepest humiliation."

Last week we left Elijah exultant, triumphant, unconscious of fatigue as he raced before Ahab's chariot to Jezreel. Had he not won the battle for the Lord, had not Jehovah been proved mighty and Baal powerless, had not the Baal worship been overthrown as the people shouted "Jehovah, He is God!" had not the Baal prophets been put to death, without a remonstrance from the cowed king, and had not God sent the rain? But Elijah had not reckoned on Jezebel. Her message came. What was it? Why did she send it? Surely she did not wish to give her victim fair play by forewarning him, for a tigress, as Dr. Maclaren comments, does not give warning of her spring. Perhaps her rage was so great that she simply had to give expression to it in some way at once, and she sent the messsage without stopping to consider its probable effect. Perhaps she feared the people after all, and in view of their acknowledgment of Jehovah did not dare risk taking Elijah's life at this time, and therefore took this means to put him to flight. Elijah could not brave her fury. (Continue with the Text Explained.)

Lessons from God's Treatment of Elijah. First of all Elijah's exhausted vitality was restored. He slept, awoke, and ate, and went in the strength of the food a forty days' journey. "In other words, like a wise physician, God administers food, rest, and exercise, and then, and not till then, proceeds to expostulate; for before, Elijah's mind was unfit for reasoning." If when we are physically exhausted we stop and take the needed rest, we shall often find that meanwhile the demon of discouragement has taken leave.

"What doest thou here, Elijah?" was the question that reached him, and he knew that he was complaining, not doing. "Go, return on thy way, and anoint Hazael and Jehu and Elisha." Lie on earth supine no longer, you are in this world for a purpose, there is a special work for you to do; do it and forget self and all your discouragements in its doing. "What doest thou here? Go." These are words for all discouraged ones. Get to work, do something for others, fill your mind and heart so full of work for others that there is no room for your own discouragements.

There is wise philosophy in the humble washerwoman's words, who when being pitied for having added the care of her sister's large family to that of her own, replied: "Yes'm, but don't ye think plenty of folks sometimes crowd out things that's worse? Ye don't have no time to set down an' think about yer aches an' pains when there's a lot of children wantin' somethin' every minute in the day; an' ye don't git no chance to be by yourself long enough to worry about a lot of things that maybe would bother ye. Ye just have to do the best ye can as they come along. Sometime I think a lot of folks around ye a blessin'." Forgetting self in others is the sovereign way to forget the things that make for despair in your own life.

Much of the discouragement in the lives of workers lies in their thinking like Elijah that all depends upon them alone. God taught Elijah that he had more than one who had not bowed the knee to Baal; and that his work was to be continued by Elisha. Elijah was responsible for his effort, but not for its result. Results are in God's keeping.

An Old Fable. The devil once thought of going out of business, and he offered his tools for sale—malice, hatred, jealousy, deceit, etc. The highest price was attached to the tool labeled "depression," and when asked why he valued that so much he replied that it was his most useful tool, because with it he could do anything with people.

The Cure for Disheartenment. Aviators tell us that their chief peril is not wind nor tempest, but strange holes and chasms in the atmosphere into which they drop unaware, abysses in which buoyant flight ceases suddenly. So in the midst of our buoyant flight we come to deep chasms of dismay, into which we sink like birds with broken wings. Yet the living seas of air on which we may float secure are not far away, and we may reach them. We are only lost when we cease to believe that they exist, and cease to struggle toward them.

The only real cure for disheartenment is faith. No lesson is clearer in history than that faith has been the vital principle of strength in the lives of all great men. What are such men as Xavier and Francis of Assisi, Livingstone and Moffat but incarnated beliefs? Take away their faith, and the whole man crumples into nothingness—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

He Shall not Fail nor be Discouraged. "It's no use," said John. "I just can't do these examples. I don't understand a thing we have been trying to do, and my work is all wrong. If it wasn't for having the other boys laugh at me, I would go back. I can't get anything right."

"Let me see your paper," said the teacher. "See, this one is right. And here is another that is almost right. You began well, and made just a trifling mistake. Let us correct that and see how well it will come out."

John was too weary and discouraged to understand very much of what she showed to him. But one thing he understood—the teacher had confidence in his ability to succeed.

"She thinks I can do it, and I believe I can," was about the way he put the case. "The teacher is a brick! She has faith in me."

That the teacher was not discouraged about him rebuked his own discouragement concerning himself, and gave him power to succeed.

Years afterward, in a time of perplexity and doubt, the lesson came back to him. He had suffered disappointment and his faith was sorely tested. He was tempted not to try again. Then he found the prophetic words, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." "I wonder if that means that God has faith in us?" he asked. "That is what it seems to mean."

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged." The words came back to him with the clear ring of assurance. He remembered the day when he stood, a big boy, ashamed to cry, but humiliated and discouraged, before the teacher's desk, and how her faith in him had given him faith in himself. Man that he was, he sobbed again before the Great Teacher who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not: "O God, if Thou art not discouraged concerning me, I will not give up in despair of myself!"

Whenever periods of depression have come upon him since then—and there have been many of them—he has recalled these words, and they have always helped him, until now the habit of courageous fighting has become fixed, and a clear faith and a hopeful spirit mark his every-day life.—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Our seasons of discouragements are but wasted time on the road.—Helen Hunt Jackson.

Are you going to deny that there is a sun in the heavens because a cloud is passing across your sky?—James Stark.

How soon a smile of God can change the world!—Browning.

The sin of the juniper-tree is not in being there, but in staying there.—Dr. R. J. Cooke.

When you feel depressed, do a good deed.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. IV: Part 3. Elijah's Discouragement and How It Was Cured.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Jezreel? 2. Was Ahab wrong in desiring to purchase the vineyard? 3. Was Naboth wrong in refusing to part with it? 4. What is covetousness? 5. Repeat the commandment about covetousness. 6. What parable about covetousness did Jesus give? 7. What four words in Josh. 7.21 tell the story of many a man's crime? 8. How many of the ten commandments did Ahab and Jezebel break? 9. Where are the commandments recorded? 10. What adjectives characterize Ahab? 11. Jezebel? 12. Elijah? 13. Who was the guiltier, Ahab or Jezebel? 14. Are you responsible for any wrong which you let another do on your behalf?

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ELIJAH IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD

Golden Text

Be sure your sin will find you out. Numbers 32.23

LESSON 1 Kings 21.1-29 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 43.1-5

REFERENCE MATERIAL Leviticus 25.23-28; Amos 8.4-10; Micah 3.1-4

1 KINGS 21.7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, *and* that dwelt with Naboth. 9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: 10 and set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst curse God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him to death.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 And the word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it. 19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A COVETOUS AND PETTISH KING, verses 1-7. Near Ahab's palace in Jezreel was a vineyard which the king coveted and tried to buy, but Naboth, the owner, refused to part with his inheritance. See Numbers 36.7. The petulant king, so unexpectedly thwarted in his wish, threw himself on his couch and refused to eat. His wife Jezebel inquired the cause of his displeasure, and was told that Naboth would not let him have the vineyard which he wanted for an herb garden. Tauntingly Jezebel asked him if in truth he ruled in Israel: if he was too weak to get what he wanted, she would get it for him.

II. A MASTERFUL AND WICKED QUEEN, verses 8-10. As Professor Phelps strikingly puts it, "Peevish King Ahab went on a hunger strike, but Jezebel knew how to manage both the executive and the judicial departments of the government." She stopped at nothing to attain her end, but she "decided to dress her wolfish deed in sheep's clothing." She wrote letters, which she signed with the King's seal, to the elders and nobles, ordering them to proclaim a fast, to set Naboth in a prominent place, and have two witnesses ready to swear that they heard Naboth curse God and the king, and then to have him carried without the city and stoned to death. "Jezebel was not a woman to 'let I dare not wait upon I would.' She was not 'too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way.' 'I will give thee the vineyard,' she said in her imperious way, and the king knew that the thing was as good as done" (Brown).

III. BASELY SUBSERVIENT ELDERS AND NOBLES, verses 11-15. Dr. Maclaren comments that Ahab was wicked and weak; Jezebel, wicked and strong; and the elders and nobles wicked and subservient. The latter did the queen's bidding; they stoned Naboth and his sons also, 2 Kings 9.26, so that no heirs were left to claim the property.

IV. THE KING'S READY ACCEPTANCE OF THE FRUITS OF THE CRIME, verse 16. When informed that her plot had succeeded, Jezebel glee-

George A. Tibbles

JEZEBEL

There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.—1 Kings 21. 2

fully told Ahab that he could claim the vineyard. According to the rabbis, to the king rightfully belonged the property of one who had cursed him. Ahab started for Jezreel.

V. A MIGHTY AVENGER, verses 17-20. *The word of Jehovah came to Elijah* bidding him *go down to meet Ahab,* who had *gone down* from Samaria to Jezreel, a distance of 20 miles and a descent of a thousand feet, to take possession of the vineyard. *Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?* were Elijah's words of greeting, charging Ahab with Jezebel's crime. See ¶ 3, p. 70. *In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.* Compare Sophocles:—

> Go where thou slew'st thy father,
> That in the self-same place thou, too, may'st die.

When the frightened king saw the stern prophet, he gasped, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* In 1 K. 18.17, Ahab addressed Elijah as "Thou troubler of Israel," but now his conscience frightened and condemned him. *I have found thee,* returned the prophet, *because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.* "Thou hast sold thyself to no purpose," Septuagint Version.

VI. A HUMBLED KING, verses 21-29. When told of the retribution that would overtake him and Jezebel (by the wall of Jezreel should the dogs devour the body of Jezebel, and Ahab's family to its last member should be destroyed), and his descendants, Ahab put on sackcloth and fasted. "Ahab is a curious compound of kingly cowardice, nerveless knavery, and fluctuating goodness. His wife is devilish, but he is flabby, bent like a willow wand to her stronger will, a tool in her hands when she is present, but ready to yield in a measure to Elijah when that mighty prophet strides upon the scene." Then came *the word of Jehovah* to Elijah: *Because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his day; but in his son's day I will bring the evil upon his home.* Read about the death of Ahab recorded in 1 K. 21.29; 22.37,38, and of his son Joram, 2 K. 9.24-26. "Ahab and Jezebel live in their accustomed way till each dies suddenly and tragically; the son of Ahab succeeds him and dies after an accident. The secular historian could tell it all without once naming God. But the presence of a prophet makes the difference. Through him we see the will of the living God present and supreme over all. Thus are we taught to live day by day in the very presence of God. Our deferred punishments and our prompt retributions, our rewards and blessings, come every hour from the hand of God" (W. D. Mackenzie).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

She wrote letters, verse 8. Excavations made in Samaria show that the Israelites had a cheap and easy method of sending written messages. Fragments of earthenware have been found written upon with a reed pen in an ink made of pure carbon or lampblack. Professor Reisner considers them the earliest specimens of Israelitish work contemporaneous with the Bible, and thinks they may have been written in the time of Ahab.

Sealed them with his seal, verse 8. The seal had on it the name or a special design of the king, and this Jezebel rubbed with ink and stamped upon the letters, making them as authoritative as would his own signature.

Ancient Seals

The vineyard which he refused to give thee for money, verse 15. When the children of Israel entered Canaan, each family was given a portion of the land which was to remain its property forever. If a man was compelled by adverse circumstances to part with his land, it could not be disposed of forever: in the Jubilee year it must be returned to him. A mortgage could run, at the most, only for a part of forty-nine years. "According to the multitude of the years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years thou shalt diminish the price of it." The story of Ruth shows that when a family was forced to offer land for sale, it was the duty of the kinsman-redeemer to

purchase the land. When the daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses and told him that their father had died, leaving no sons, Moses declared that they were then entitled to the same rights as sons. "Let them be married to whom they think best," he ordered; "only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married. So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cleave every one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers."

Orientals have always been unwilling to sell inherited property. When Shemer sold the hill of Samaria to Omri for his capital, we are told that "he called the city which he built after the name of Shemer," and orientalists believe this must have been the condition on which Shemer parted with his inheritance, for thus he retained for himself the "remembrance."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What experience has Ahab had with Elijah? What characteristics has Ahab shown? Elijah?

Chapters Twenty and Twenty-two of First Kings. These chapters record Ahab's Syrian campaigns and his death in battle. In the Septuagint Version they follow each other, our intervening twenty-first chapter being placed directly after chapter nineteen, which we studied last week.

Chapter Twenty-one. Probably a few years have elapsed since Elijah's visit to Horeb, for persecution has ceased. He no longer fears Jezebel; he faces Ahab and boldly denounces him for his share in the criminal business of Naboth's vineyard.

The Effect of Ahab's Sin. Since the division of the kingdom it has not been possible for the king of Israel, however much a man like Omri might have wished it, to make himself a despot. The people were jealous of their rights. Elijah was the defender of their liberties, the champion in special of the free landowner. The murder of Naboth seems to have aroused the people more than did the Baal worship of the royal house, and to have had greater influence in bringing about the revolution which overthrew the house of Omri.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jezreel, the modern Zerim, is on an eminence two hundred feet high on the Plain of Esdraelon. Apparently it was the summer residence of Ahab, or perhaps it either replaced or rivaled Samaria as the capital at this time. Eastward between Mt. Gilboa and the hills of Galilee the broad Valley of Jezreel sweeps downward to Bethshan and the Jordan: westward the Great Plain of Esdraelon extends to the sea. Naboth's vineyard seems to have lain before the palace windows. Today wine-presses cut into the rock are to be seen on the eastern side of the hill.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

As story after story such as these we are now studying is told, there is a tremendous and cumulative effect upon the minds of all, even of young pupils, in the uniformity with which like causes produce like effects on man's soul and on his fate. The wages of sin is death. Let these Bible stories be so dramatically presented as to leave lasting impressions with young pupils, and their later study of parallel cases in so-called profane history will enforce their realization of this great truth. In older classes citations from profane history should be given by the teacher, or preferably by the pupils, to multiply the immediate evidence upon which deductions as to the uniformity of retribution for national or personal iniquity rest.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS

Beginning the Lesson. In excavating the site of ancient Samaria, below the remains of Roman and Greek and Babylonian periods, ruins of a massive structure covering an acre and a half were found which belong to the ancient Hebrew occupation. It was probably the ivory palace which Ahab built for

himself, 1 K. 22.39. An alabaster vase inscribed with the name of Ahab's contemporary, Osorkon II of Egypt, was unearthed and a hundred clay tablets were dug up, which may have belonged to Ahab's library. One of them is said to be a letter from an Assyrian King to King Ahab, and a number of them contain an inventory of the furniture of the royal palace. In a storeroom adjoining the palace were fragments of pottery written upon in ink, in the ancient Hebrew script. These were labels for jars of oil and wine, as the writing shows. The jars were filled with "wine of the vineyard of the Tell"—Naboth's vineyard, perhaps, which was "hard by the palace."

Jezebel and Lady Macbeth. Our lesson has to do with the time when Ahab, who was accustomed to being humored, not thwarted, failed to get his way about a vineyard. Jezebel, his queen, however, knew how to manage the matter for him. Professor Phelps says in this connection: "Whatever truth there may be in Kipling's assertion that the female of the species is more deadly than the male, there can be no doubt that Jezebel was a more formidable foe than Ahab."

Recall that scene in Macbeth where Lady Macbeth urges her husband on to the murder of the king. Macbeth has told her that

> "We will proceed no further in this business:
> He hath honor'd me of late,"

and Lady Macbeth's scorn blazes forth; she accuses him of being a coward,

> "Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
> Like the poor cat i' the adage."

"Prithee, peace," Macbeth answers:

> "I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none."

But her words prevail and Macbeth nerves himself to murder Duncan the king. He brings back to their chamber the bloody daggers.

> "Why did you bring those daggers from the place?
> They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
> The sleeping grooms with blood,"

commands Lady Macbeth. But Macbeth replies:

> "I'll go no more:
> I am afraid to think what I have done;
> Look on't again I dare not."

"Infirm of purpose! Give me the dagger!" exclaims Lady Macbeth, and when she returns from carrying out her deed she cries: "My hands are of your color, but I shame to wear a heart so white."

How like Lady Macbeth's "Give me the dagger!" is Queen Jezebel's "I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth!" How like Lady Macbeth is Jezebel herself! She is even more masterful than Lady Macbeth, for instead of urging her husband on to the murder, she attends to that herself. "A very Jezebel," we say of a strong-willed, masterful woman, who fears neither God nor man, a Lucretia Borgia who dominated the papacy, a Catherine de Medici who really was the one who ordered the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.

From the time that Jezebel entered the kingdom of Israel as its queen till her death, her evil deeds form a large part of its history.

Ahab and Elijah. See the topic for Intermediates and Seniors.

Covetousness Ignores the Rights of Others in Order to Gratify Itself. Covetousness is utterly unscrupulous as to the means by which it gratifies itself. Ahab wants Naboth's vineyard. "I must have a garden of herbs." "But Naboth has only a small vineyard. It is all he has, while thou hast great wealth, a palace, with all its surroundings." "No matter, I must have my garden of herbs." "But Naboth is in the way!" "Never mind; *murder Naboth!*"

Is that spirit abroad today in our own midst? Don't evade the teaching because of that tragic word "murder." There are refined methods of murder. We can murder men by false witnesses. We can murder them by trumped-up stories, by defamation, by a suggestive shrug. One business man can murder another. That is the spirit of murder which declares to itself, "No matter who goes down, I must be up." And he who gains his money by the deliberate crushing of his brother will stand before his Lord as the brother's murderer.

To this disposition does covetousness lead a man, to the blind indifference of a cow which will hungrily trample down all the flowers in a country lane to obtain a single mouthful of grass. To get his garden of herbs, Ahab crushed his brother.

How different is all this from that broad, magnanimous principle which Paul lays down to the Philippians—a principle which might well form the maxim of every life: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Don't trample down another man's garden in order to get to your own. Don't ignore the rights of others in selfishly claiming your own. That is the Christian disposition, but it is just the opposite to the one that avarice creates. Avarice makes men insensible to another's rights. To the covetous man there are no rights. He knows no rule but this:

"The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

"Take heed of covetousness," for it destroys all a man's brotherliness, and shuts his eyes against a neighbor's right.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in a Sermon.

Thou Shalt not Covet. Our desires and longings require to be watched over quite as much as, often far more than, our actions. For in all but the noblest and purest there is going on a constant ferment and agitation, escaping the notice of others, sometimes escaping even their own, not always encountering effective resistance from within, and constantly destined to leave a mark permanently upon the whole disposition.

It is therefore the right control and government of the heart upon which the Decalogue insists as the crown and climax of the divine words uttered on Sinai. With how many of us is religion in this sense a reality? How many of us ever really bring our unspoken and unacted thoughts and desires under the influence of a higher law, and recognize that they too may be fruitful exceedingly for good or evil, and that for those thoughts and desires, as well as for the deeds into which they may ripen, we are answerable?

But a question naturally arises here. Is it possible to repress all unlawful desires? Desires are not under our command. They come and go unbidden. It is one thing to give definite rules of conduct. Thou shalt not worship any other god. Honor thy father and mother. Thou shalt not bear false witness. These and precepts like them deal with actions, not with thoughts and feelings. We are conscious of our freedom to obey or to transgress them. But it is another thing altogether to say to the mind, "This thought, thou must not think it"; or to the heart, "This emotion, thou must not feel it"; or to the soul, "This desire, thou must not wish it." They are where they are, spite of ourselves.

Now it is on the face of the matter highly improbable that a set of laws so eminently practical in its every detail as is the Decalogue, up to this point, would conclude with a precept that was beyond the power of man to fulfil, that would be practicable only for beings of another order, with mental and moral constitutions different from those known to us.

The meaning of the command is, therefore, probably this: There is a stage at which evil desires that have involuntarily arisen are voluntarily entertained and *re*tained. They not simply find a place within us, but we *will* that they shall keep their place there—at least we make no effort or no sufficient effort to dislodge them. The dust, as it were, makes its way through the chinks and crevices of our moral fabric (which, it may be allowed, is a condition of our earthly being, and not to be laid to our charge), and we make no attempt to sweep it away; we suffer it to accumulate, to darken and disfigure, perhaps lastingly to damage what it settles upon (which is *not* a condition of our being, and is to be laid to our charge). In other words, it is the application of the *will* to an unlawful desire that constitutes the sinfulness of it.

Sooner or later we all discover that every misdirection of the desires from the higher to the lower aims brings its punishment. Sooner or later we have all to learn that the great object for which we live is not enjoyment, nor pleasure, nor even happiness. Happiness indeed may come, but rarely, very rarely, as the result of our striving directly for it, least of all of our coveting it. One might go further and say, "Why do men who make happiness their goal so often miss it?" Why? Because they make it their goal. They are like unskilled divers who, aiming and starting straight for the gem that lies glittering under

the waters, miss it because they make no allowance for the refracting medium through which they have to pass. So it would be truer still to say in the words of one of the greatest thinkers of our century (John Stuart Mill), that "Those only are happy who have their minds fixed on some other object than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on some art or pursuit followed not as a means but as an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else they find happiness by the way."—Condensed from Sermons of Simon Singer.

Another Ahab and Other Naboths' Vineyards. Soon after William's accession to the Prussian throne he coveted six acres that adjoined his Potsdam property. The owner refused to part with it for the sum the Kaiser offered to pay. Through his agent the Kaiser raised his offer to four hundred pounds, but the owner said that seven hundred pounds was the lowest figure at which he would sell. A month later the owner received notice that his land was required for military purposes, and he would be paid one hundred and fifty pounds. He was obliged to give up the land. Six months later the Kaiser purchased it from the government for the exact sum which he had first offered.

The uncontrolled greed of France's and Belgium's mighty neighbor led him later to covet their vineyards. We all know how he obtained his desire for a time, doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and how retribution overtook him and his house.

For Discussion. 1. Did Jezebel love Ahab? Does that kind of woman love that kind of man? Is there any excuse for the commission of a wrong for the sake of love? It means "I care more for your immediate pleasure than for your real prosperity; I care more for your gratitude than for your good." May love of country lead to deeds comparable to Jezebel's deed for love of Ahab? Give examples.

2. How potent a woman's influence is for good or ill! Is Dr. F. B. Meyer right in adding, "But an evil woman will more quickly debase her husband than a noble woman will uplift him"?

3. Does might make right, or right make might? "God deliver all nations from the sway of the mere tyrant will, blind to all but its own desires. And God deliver us from the tyrant will within ourselves, the determination to have our own way without regard to law or mercy" (Dr. W. D. Mackenzie).

4. Attacks that ministers and reformers make, and do not make, on what they disapprove. "It takes a brave man to be God's messenger, and in his cause there is room for the highest type of daring. If you doubt it, try the business. Great numbers cry, 'The preachers are afraid of men who have money'; and others, 'Don't oppose the majority, or you will lose your hold.' Between unrighteous greed on the one hand, and unscrupulous ignorance on the other, you will have abundant opportunity to try your mettle." Give examples of specific crusades started by ministers. Consider Dr. Lyman Abbott's criticism of The Interchurch Steel Report, in The Outlook, Aug. 11, 1920.

5. The wickedness of weakness.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Note the threefold repetition of Elijah's attempt to evade Elisha's tenacity, and of Elisha's protests: what other iterative element is contained in the narrative? Find analogies in folk tales. 2. What does the presence of these "sons of prophets" indicate? 3. Why did Elijah bid Elisha tarry? 4. What did Elisha mean by his request, verse 9? 5. What did Elijah mean by his answer? 6. How do you interpret Elisha's words in verse 12? 7. What is your final appraisement of Elijah? 8. What qualities does Elisha show in this account? 9. What did a king later say of Elisha in 2 K. 13.14? 10. Bury the workman and carry on the work: give several examples. 11. When were the Books of Kings and Chronicles written?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JEHOVAH'S FEARLESS CHAMPION

Beginning the Lesson. One day when the ground was covered with snow I threw out some pieces of bread for the birds. A sparrow seized the largest piece and flew off with it. All the other sparrows started after that fortunate bird. They chased him everywhere in their effort to get the bread away from him. They could have feasted well upon the pieces which they left, but

the only piece they seemed to care for was the one that sparrow had. Silly birds they were! Yet King Ahab was just as silly. What did the king have? What did he think he lacked? What did he do about it?

The vineyard made over into a garden of herbs adjoining the palace would, no doubt, have added much to the luxurious grounds, and it was natural for the king to wish to purchase it, if Naboth would sell. But Ahab found the vineyard could not be acquired lawfully, and then the desire so filled his heart that he had no joy in his own great possessions. We have a proverb that says: "The cow in the meadow, knee-deep in clover, often looks over the hedge and longs for the common." The one thing Ahab could not have was the one thing he most wanted. What cared he for the feelings or rights of Naboth? We call his sin covetousness, and rightly; but fundamentally it was selfishness, that basal sin which is the root of all sin. When the Lebanon cedar gets a start in the young forest it crowds out all other vegetable life: no fir nor hemlock, no fern nor flower even, can thrive where those cedars flourish. So selfishness when it has gained a good start in the garden of the heart crowds out the flowers of kindness, thoughtfulness for others, self-sacrifice, justice.

Ahab's Sin. It was Jezebel who concocted the plot to murder Naboth, and who had it carried out. Ahab did not know about it, it seems, until she bade him take possession of the vineyard. And yet Elijah's question is, "Hast *thou* killed, and also taken possession?" And he denounces Ahab as having sold himself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah. Was Ahab responsible for what Jezebel had done?

If several boys stand around a tree and eat the stolen apples which one boy who alone has climbed the tree throws down to them, is the boy in the tree the only guilty one? Is the clerk who uses a false weight a cheat, while the employer who approves of the transaction is not? Is not a man who hires an assassin to kill another held by law as guilty as though he had done the deed himself? "But," you say, "Ahab did not know that Jezebel was going to kill Naboth." He knew that she was going to get possession of the vineyard, and he knew that she could do so only by foul means. He was content to let her obtain it in any way she chose. And when she had accomplished her purpose, he was eager to reap the fruits of her crime. Josephus says that when Ahab learned what Jezebel had done "he sprang from his bed with delight." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." In God's sight the weak mortal who lets another do the wicked work for him and rejoices in the spoils has sold himself to do evil as surely as though he did it with his own hands. Ahab was a perjurer, a murderer, a thief. He had abandoned himself to the service of sin.

"What did your vineyard cost you, Ahab? Very cheap, was it not?" questions Mark Guy Pearse. And then he answers the question: "It cost *himself*. For that vineyard he gave his hope, his peace, his very life, *himself*. Sin has only one price. It takes the man."

The King and the Fearless Prophet. From the capital of Samaria, as it would seem, Ahab rose up, and went down the steep descent which leads into the plain of Jezreel. He went in state, in his royal chariot. Behind him, probably in the same chariot, were two of the great officers of his court; Bidkar, and one whose name afterwards bore a dreadful sound to the House of Ahab—Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. And now they neared the city of Jezreel; and now the green terraces appeared, which Ahab at last might call his own, with no obstinate owner to urge against him the claims of law and of property; and there was the fatal vineyard, the vacant plot of ground waiting for its new possessor.

There was a solitary figure standing on the deserted ground as though the dead Naboth had risen from his bloody grave to warn off the king from his unlawful gains. It was Elijah. As in the most pathetic of Grecian dramas, the unjust sentence has no sooner been pronounced on the unfortunate Antigone, than Tiresias rises up to pronounce the curse on the Theban king, so, in this grander than any Grecian tragedy, the well-known prophet was there to utter the doom of the House of Ahab. He has come, we know not whence. He has arisen; he has come down at the word of the Lord to meet the king, as once before, in this second crisis of his life.

"Here was evil-doing facing righteousness, and it was ashamed and afraid! Here was guilt facing Conscience Incarnate and it shivered and trembled like a leaf before the wind! Here was the whole method of seeking pleasure in

ways which God does not approve having the cup of joy dashed from its lips by the prophet of the Most High! What a dramatic scene it was! The king thought he was going down that morning to take possession of a lovely vineyard, and he heard his own death warrant read to him. He planned to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, but he met the day of judgment in the person of that prophet of God! God is not mocked!"

The prophet and the king parted, to meet no more. But the king's last act was an act of penitence: on every anniversary of Naboth's death he wore the Eastern signs of mourning. And the prophet's words were words of mercy. It was as if the revelation of "the still small voice" was becoming clearer and clearer. For in the heart of Ahab there was a sense of better things, and that sense is recognised and blessed.—Dean Stanley, in History of the Jewish Church.

Sin Does not Pay. "What profit is there in wrong doing? What has the devil paid you for your service?" asked Maud Ballington Booth in a State's Prison, and waited for an answer. One of the men slowly said: "He's taken my money and my friends and my liberty. I was a long time learning that sin does not pay. I would like to publish to all the young men of the world the verse I learned when I was a boy—'Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'"

Be Sure your Sin Will Find out You. Our Golden Text reads a little differently: it says, Be sure your sin will find you out. But *you* is the emphatic word, and the text does not mean, as so often it is taken to mean, that your sin will be found out, but rather that you will be found out by your sin, that your sin will find out you. Your sin may never be found out, but it will find you out, for you cannot sin without suffering in character, though you may sin without suffering in reputation. Ahab's sin found him out. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" he exclaimed to Elijah, before that prophet said a word to him about his crime, for Ahab's conscience told him he was guilty.

Eggs that Croak. A traveller in West Africa vouches for a curious discovery. He was walking along a dry path when he heard a croaking noise that seemed to come from beneath his feet. Digging to investigate the cause, he discovered thirteen crocodile eggs at a depth of eighteen inches. All the young crocodiles hatched out within half an hour after being dug up. As I read his statement I thought, What a parable that is of sin! Sin is an egg that croaks, it refuses to be hidden. The sinner may think that he has put it out of his life, that he will remember it no more, but far down below the surface of things its presence makes itself known, and though it may not finally be brought to the light of day for all to gaze upon, it haunts the sinner unceasingly.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Weakness will darken into wickedness.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Take heed and beware of covetousness.—Luke 12.15.

Sin is choosing and acting in opposite to our sense of right.—Channing.

Sin, and you may be forgiven, but you will never so long as life lasts be able to count on freedom from its consequences.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

We may repent, return to God and be forgiven, but we cannot *undo*.—F. B. Meyer.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. II: Part 4. The story of Elijah and Jezebel told in five scenes. Scene 1. Jezebel's coming to Samaria and Establishing there the Worship of Baal. Scene 2. Jezebel Receiving News of the Contest on Mount Carmel and Uttering Threats against Elijah. Scene 3. Why and how Jezebel Secured Naboth's Vineyard. Scene 4. Elijah Denouncing Ahab. Scene 5. The Death of Jezebel.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Give an account of Elisha's first meeting with Elijah (1 K. 19.19-21). 2. What does 2 K. 3.11 tell us was Elisha's relation to Elijah, and what does the expression mean? 3. In what words did Naomi urge Ruth to leave her, and what was Ruth's reply? Of what words in our next lesson do Ruth's words remind you? 4. Had Elisha tarried at Gilgal or Bethel or Jericho, what would he have missed? 5. Where is Gilgal? 6. Bethel? 7. Jericho? 8. What does the word *translated* mean, and what earlier hero was translated? (Gen. 5.24). 9. When were the Books of Kings and Chronicles written?

ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN

Golden Text

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2.10

LESSON 2 Kings 2.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18
REFERENCE MATERIAL Mark 9.2-8; 2 Timothy 4.1-8

2 KINGS 2.5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came near to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me to the Jordan. And he said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by the Jordan. 8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. 9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless,* if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. 11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ELIJAH'S LAST JOURNEY, verses 1-6. The time has now come when *Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven.*

"Men mourned about the Christian's couch, and said:
'Alas! He leaveth home; this night he will be dead';
While angels, smiling o'er the group forlorn,
Whispered: 'He cometh home, this night he will be born.'"
—W. B. Seabrook.

For the last time Elijah surveyed from Gilgal's eminence the district where he had so long lived and labored for Jehovah, and then, accompanied by only one faithful disciple, Elisha, the son of Shaphat, he went to Bethel, and then to Jericho. As far back as the time of Samuel there had been schools of the prophets where youths were in training, and Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho were now the centers for such schools. On this last journey of Elijah's, at Jericho, as previously at Bethel and at Gilgal, *sons of the prophets,* as the youths in training were called, said to Elisha, *Knowest thou not that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy hand today?* In oriental speech, *today* might mean "very soon," not necessarily that day. Elijah was old and doubtless very feeble, and they recognized that he could not have long to live. *Yea, I know it; hold your peace,* answered Elisha. "Do not speak of it," he meant—he could not bear to have the thought put into words.

Tarry here, said Elijah to Elisha for the third time (see verses 2 and 4), *for Jehovah hath sent me to the Jordan.* Perhaps he would test his follower's devotion and faithfulness. "God tests us as Elijah tested Elisha. The Divine Guide, facing a hill of difficulty, turns to us and says, searchingly, 'Tarry here, I pray you,' and then he looks into our souls and waits for our answer. It means that we shall tarry if not brave enough and devoted enough to go with him" (McFarland). Perhaps Elijah really wished to be alone at the end as Moses had been alone. "I would not mind dying," said a noble man who, like Elijah, was by temperament a lonely man, "if I only could go off somewhere

and die alone." *As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth,* solemnly asserted Elisha, *I will not leave thee.* Compare Ruth's answer to Naomi, Ruth 1.16,17.

And they two went on. "So these two, leaving the sons of the prophets behind, passed down the falling land as the great planets pass to their setting through groups of lesser stars" (Smith).

II. AT THE JORDAN, verses 7-10. There were fifty sons of the prophets standing afar off, as Elijah and Elisha *stood by the Jordan.* Making a roll of his mantle and using it as Moses used his rod (Ex. 7.17-20), Elijah *smote the waters, and they were divided so that they two went over on dry ground.* "As there are fords at Jericho," a well-known commentator observes, "the object of this miracle, as of the one subsequently ascribed to Elisha, is not self-evident."

"And now they were lost to the view amidst the thicket on the farther shore, under the shade of those hills of Pisgah and of Gilead, where, in former times, a prophet greater even than Elijah had been withdrawn from the eyes of his people—whence, in his early youth, Elijah had himself descended on his august career. He knew that his hour was come; he knew that he had at last returned home; that he was to go whither Moses had gone before him; and he turned to Elisha to ask for his last wish" (Stanley).

Ask what I shall do for thee, what last blessing shall I give thee, *before I am taken from thee,* said Elijah. *And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.* That is, the portion of the first born, RVm. When Elijah had cast his mantle upon Elisha (1 K. 19.19), he had thereby signified that he adopted Elisha as his son. Now Elisha asks, not for twice as much power and inspiration as Elijah had, but for twice what a younger son would inherit, twice as much as, perhaps, the other sons of the prophets would receive—he wished to be a worthy successor of his master. *Thou hast asked a hard thing,* Elijah replied, meaning that Elisha's request was not in his power to grant, but in God's. *If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.* This would be a sign that God had granted his prayer. Or, as Dr. George Matheson interprets: "Separated from the figurative element which contains them, his words amount to this: 'The test of a kindred spirit is sight in absence. Can you sustain that test? Can you see me when I am taken up? Can you be impelled by my influence, can I be a motive in your life, when I have ceased to be in truth with it? If so, you have proved your possession of a kindred nature; you have maintained your right to wear my mantle.'" Recall the passing over of Valiant-for-the-Truth in Bunyan's allegory. "When Mr. Valiant-for-the-Truth understood his summons, he called for his friends and told them of it. Then said he, 'I am going to my Fathers. . . . My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it.'"

IV. ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION, verses 11,12. Elijah is often represented as ascending in a flaming chariot: the text merely says that he *went up by a whirlwind into heaven:* there came a sudden cyclone, what seemed to Elisha a chariot and horses of fire parted them, and in that whirlwind Elijah passed from the seen to the unseen world. "It is enough to mark how fittingly such an account closes such a life. He had appeared in the history we know not whence, and now he is gone in like manner. The ascension of Elijah stands out as the highest representation of the end of a great and good career: of death as seen under its noblest aspect—as the completion and crown of the life which had preceded it, as the mysterious shrouding of the departed within the invisible world" (Stanley). "The lesson here for us is that the way of our going, as well as the time, is of the Lord's determination, and not ours. And we can so live as to slip into God's heaven. We can so live that men shall say, 'He was not, for God took him'" (Parker). *My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!* cried Elisha, addressing his departed master. The Chaldaic version gives the sense of the words thus: "My master, my master, who by thy intercession wast of more use to Israel than horses or chariots." When Luther died, one of his co-workers said, "Alas, he has gone, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof, who has ruled the church in this age of the world."

V. ELISHA BECOMES ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR, verses 13-18. Elisha rent his clothes in token of his grief at the loss of Elijah, took up Elijah's mantle, and went to the bank of the Jordan where he repeated Elijah's miracle. *The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha,* said the prophets who had been left

on the western bank of the river, and at once they accepted Elisha as Elijah's true successor. "There must have been good Divinity Halls in those days," observes Dr. Alexander Whyte, "since there were fifty probationers of such humility and belief in better men than themselves!" The "probationers" urged Elisha to send them in search of Elijah, but knowing such a search would be futile, he refused at first, but when they persisted in their request he allowed them to go. They found him not.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, verse 11. It is true of Elijah as of Moses, that "No man knoweth his sepulcher; no man knoweth his resting-place until this day." Yet Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Druses venerate the traditional tomb of Elijah on Mount Carmel, and Mohammedans offer sacrifice there upon a special day in midsummer.

In Jewish and Mohammedan legends Elijah is the mysterious wanderer who often appears and disappears. Ever since his death the Jew has been awaiting his return. In the era of the Talmud, goods without owners were laid aside until Elijah's coming. Today a seat is prepared for him at the circumcision of a Jewish child, and at a certain moment in the Passover Feast the door is opened for him to enter. The custom at the Passover is thus graphically pictured in one of Israel Zangwill's stories:—

"The first part of the elaborate Passover ritual passed peacefully, and the evening meal—mercifully set in the middle—was reached. But Elijah's goblet still stood in the center of the table untasted. Every time the ritual cup-drinking came round, the children glanced at the great silver goblet placed for the Prophet of Redemption. Alas! the brimming raisin wine remained ever at the same level. They found consolation in the thought that the great moment was still to come, the moment of the third cup, when, mother throwing open the door, father would rise, holding the goblet on high, and sonorously salute an unseen visitor. True, in other years, though they had almost heard the rush of wings, the great shining cup had remained full, and when it was replaced on the white cloth, a vague resentment, as at a spurned hospitality, had stirred in each youthful breast. But many reasons could be found to exculpate Elijah,—not omitting their own sins."

He took up the mantle of Elijah, verse 13. When a great teacher dies he bequeathes his patched mantle to the disciple that he most esteems, and the moment the elect disciple puts on the holy mantle he is vested with the whole power and sanctity of his predecessor. The mantles used by ascetics and saints have always been the objects of religious veneration in the East. The holy man's power is founded upon his sacred character, and that rests upon his poverty and contempt of worldly goods. His mantle is his all, and its transfer marks out his heir. Some of those sacred mantles can be traced for seven centuries, and their value increases with their age.—John Malcolm, in History of Persia, quoted by Dr. Alexander White.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Under what circumstances had Elijah learned that Elisha was to be his successor? How had Elisha received his call? How was it that Queen Jezebel once declared Elijah should die? Where was it that Elijah himself once wished to die?

The Death of Ahab. The last chapter of First Kings contains an account of Ahab's alliance with Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, against Syria, of Ahab's death in battle, and of the succession of *Ahaziah,* his son, who did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, walking in the way of his father. The first chapter of Second Kings records the death of Ahaziah and the succession of his son *Jehoram* to the throne.

The Close of Elijah's Life. How long Elijah lived and how the closing years of his life were spent, we do not know. It may be that the lesson he learned on Mount Horeb, that the idolatry of the people could be overthrown, not by one great miracle, but by long continued effort, led him to engage in active superintendence of the schools of the prophets, teaching those in training there how to complete his mission.

There is no chronological note in the account to tell us when he ended his work; it was "when Jehovah would take Elijah into heaven."

The Early Life of Elisha. Except for the account of his call, 1 K. 19.19-21, we are told nothing about Elisha until this account of Elijah's translation. 2 Kings 3.11 describes him as the one "who poured water on the hands of Elijah," that is, who had been the aged prophet's attendant.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

There were at least three places called *Gilgal,* literally, *a circle of stones, a cromlech.* The Gilgal from which Elijah and Elisha started could not have been the one in the low Jordan Valley near Jericho, for they went from Gilgal *down* to Bethel. It was probably the one among the hills of Ephraim, about eight miles north of *Bethel.* Bethel was on the southern frontier of Samaria, on the great highway between Galilee and Judea. From a mountain east of Bethel Lot surveyed the land and made his choice. At Bethel Jacob had his vision, and here Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves for worship. *Jericho,* the city taken by Joshua on entering the promised land, was in the Jordan valley six miles from the river, and also the same distance from the Dead Sea. From Bethel to Jericho was a distance of about fifteen miles. When the two prophets crossed the Jordan into *Moab* they were near the spot where Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and near Mount Nebo, where Moses lay buried in the grave which no man knew.

As you bring out the story, follow the course on your map from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho, to the Jordan, and across to the neighborhood of Mount Nebo.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Let us call upon the young men to perpetuate the integrity of their fathers. Let us challenge the daughters to continue in a fresh generation the piety of their mothers. The time has come to dare our young people, to taunt them, to put them on their mettle. In all our churches we find a diminishing band of aged men who, in their day, bore a valiant witness for the truth, and, in many cases, reared the buildings in which we worship. We honor them, and say of them as the Spartan youths said of their grandsires, "They *have been* brave!" And most of us are surrounded by excellent and devout men, who hold office in our churches today. These, too, we honor with grateful delight. We owe them much. "They *are* brave!" But when we look around for the next generation of stalwarts, it must be confessed, without yielding to pessimism or panic, that things are not so promising. The multiplication of popular pleasures is working sad havoc. They are few upon whom we can look with pride and say, "These *will be* brave!" But let us sound this new note! Let us tell of the splendid heroism and noble self-sacrifice and beautiful devotion of their fathers. And as, with one hand, we point to the honored graves of the standard-bearers who have fallen in the fight, and, with the other, to the battle still hotly contested and still unwon, surely, surely, surely we shall discover those whose memories will twine themselves about the tender grace of a day that is dead, and whose soul will respond with eagerness to so searching and pathetic a challenge! Let us say to them, "Elijah, my servant, is translated: now therefore arise!" and peradventure Elisha will step forth and claim the mantle that has fallen.—F. W. Boreham, in The Other Side of the Hill.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
DIVINE APPROVAL OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson. Cite instances of those who, consciously facing death, have wanted human companionship and support. There is the little dressmaker in Dickens' Tale of Two Cities, who says to Sydney Carton, "Kind Stranger, let me hold your hand." What are the motives?

Do animals seek or shun their kind in the dying moment? Why? Cite instances of this same tendency among men and women. Said a physician to an old man, almost ninety years old: "You must have a nurse at night. It distresses your nephews and nieces to know that you are alone. You might die

alone." "Well," said the old man, "it's very nice of the younger generation to be so concerned, but at this point of my career I think I am the one whose feelings properly may be considered paramount. And *I don't want anybody around when I die.*" Was not Elijah a man who would naturally have this same feeling? May this not explain his reluctance at first to have Elisha accompany him?

Elijah was ever "a marcher." We have come to the time in his life's story when "it was only three marches more and after that, promotion."

The Benediction of Older Men's Influence. How fitting where the energy and enthusiasm of unwearied youth invite from the ripened experience of maturer men the benediction of their influence! One of my friends was present many years ago in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, when this occurred. It was in the days when Lyman Beecher had come to make his home with his illustrious son, and every Sunday he was in the pastor's pew enjoying the services in that great sanctuary. One morning Henry Ward Beecher was unfolding some aspect of the new theology as he had come to hold it. when suddenly up stood Lyman Beecher, saying, "Henry, may I say a word just there?" Beecher paused in his sermon and with a look of filial affection at once responded, "Certainly, Father, say on!" Then Lyman Beecher turned to the congregation and said: "Henry puts it this way. But it is not that way—it is this way"—and he proceeded to state the truth as he saw it. Henry Ward Beecher stood listening to his father with an expression on his face which blessed the listening, wondering congregation more than many a sermon. And when Lyman Beecher had concluded, he paid a lovely tribute to his father's influence upon his own life, and then resumed his sermon where he had been interrupted.

God grant us a double portion of the spirit of these elder brothers who in the full maturity and mellow ripeness of their powers can bless us all. Let the freshmen and the sophomores receive a fresh anointing at the hands of the seniors in the great school of spiritual experience.

Every young man needs the friendship of older men. And nine out of ten of those maturer men crave closer contact with the young fellows themselves, if those chaps did not so often seem to shy off the moment an older man makes a move toward them. The professor at the head of the department where you are studying, the man of affairs at the head of the bank or the store where you work, the man of experience on your street whom you might know well if you only would—all of these men would rejoice in closer friendships with the young fellows who are still living in anticipation rather than in the realization of the great things of life. Draw up your chair, Elisha, for Elijah is in the mood for contacts highly rewarding!—Dean Charles R. Brown, in The Story Books of the Early Hebrews.

The Passing of a Great Soul. Carlyle tells us that the eye sees what the eye brings the power of seeing. The end of a human life is noble or ignoble according to the eyes through which it is viewed. To eyes that see in man merely an animal there is nothing noble in his death. "For what befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; all go unto one place; all are of dust, and all turn to dust again." That is the materialist's view of man, and that is all the materialist can see in the death of a man. "The eye sees what the eye brings the power for seeing."

But if the eye sees in man a spirit dwelling in a body as its temporary habitation, then man's life and his death take on high meaning. If man is immortal, then neither his birth nor his death is commonplace.

Elijah was not an exception but a type. His life was not an exception. There have been thousands in every way his equal in character and faithfulness. He fulfilled his mission, did the work appointed to him. Others have done likewise; thousands are now doing the same.

Nor was Elijah's death an exception, a mere prodigy, an amazing miracle. If it were, it would have little significance. His end was attended with special circumstances, even as his life had its peculiarities. But the special things in his life and in his death were not the essential things.

The essential thing in Elijah's end was that God took him away. The accidental, the unimportant thing was that he was taken up by a whirlwind.

God takes away all good men as truly as he did Elijah, but he takes them in many ways. The moral significance of a man's life does not lie in the manner

of his death. And the honor or the dishonor of a man's death consists entirely in its moral elements.

The unusual and impressive accompaniments of Elijah's taking away were merely intended to teach that a good man's end is always a glorious culmination. These accompaniments were visible to the natural eye; the moral glories of a righteous man's end are visible to the spiritual eye. But they appear only to those who have spiritual vision.—Dr. John T. McFarland, in The Adult Bible Class Monthly.

Chariots of Fire and Chariots of Cloud. In the South Kensington Museum hangs the picture entitled "The Death of Cromwell." The bed, the face of his daughter, the whole room are in shadows, but a bright light emanates from the Bible lying on his breast and flashes upward into his face a glory not of earth. The artist has pictured the secret of all glorious deaths. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.

Very few Christians die in ecstasy. Dr. G. H. Knight writes in In the Cloudy and Dark Day:—"Martyrs have sung themselves into a waiting heaven; and some believing souls have had death-beds lighted up with entrancing joys. But only a few Elijahs here and there go home in a chariot of fire. The majority of God's redeemed host are carried out of sight in a chariot of cloud, conscious only of a deep inward calm and a blessed hope. There is no rapture, only a sweet expectancy. In the weakness of body and weariness of mind hardly a word is uttered, and all around the bed are falling tears.

"Some, indeed, have even less than this. They die amid the shadows, trembling lest they should be castaways. Still, God's redeemed and loved are just as safe in the chariot of cloud as in the chariot of fire. The victory is real, though the song of victory is reserved for the other side, to burst forth in the first moment of entry within the veil. 'I have no raptures,' said a dying saint, 'but I have perfect peace.' That is enough."

Baptized for the Dead. This old world of ours holds nothing more truly and intensely pathetic than a dying man's anxiety about the perpetuation of his life-work. George Eliot has twice portrayed this hunger of the soul with a very delicate and tender touch. Who can read Romola and not be affected by the scenes between the blind old philosopher, Bardo, and his vigorous young son, Dino? The aged thinker feels life literally oozing out of him. Every day his body is more frail, his mind less acute. But he delights in the manly strength of Dino, and rejoices in the fond hope that his son will take up the glorious task when at last he lays it down. And the agonizing climax of the old man's grief is reached when Dino repudiates the charge, and leaves his father to die without a successor. It is hard for the standard-bearer to feel the steel of the foe, and to know that there is no other hand to seize the flag as it falls from his dying grasp.

Again, in Daniel Deronda we have all felt the exultation of the aged Jew who could not contain his delight that Daniel would echo his voice and continue his work after he was gone. Yes; it is a great thing for Stephen to have his Saul, for Paul to have his Timothy, for the dying man as he turns his face to the wall, to feel that another has been baptized on his behalf. It is good for a man to make his will, to leave all his affairs in perfect order, to die with no anxiety concerning things in this world or in any other. But surely that man can greet the angel of Death with a radiant face who can point to another—youthful, virile, enthusiastic—who will grasp the tools as they fall from worn-out hands and carry the good work to perfect completion. That man rears his own immortality who prudently toils to raise up to himself, whilst his sun is high in the heavens, spiritual successors whose voices will be heard when his sun has set for the last time.

And, of course, looking at the matter the other way, it is an equally fine thing for a man, with his life all before him, to accept a sacred charge from dying lips. A thought like this was surely surging in the mind of Abraham Lincoln when he dedicated the battlefield of Gettysburg as a place of public burial. "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground," he said. "The brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we may take increased devo-

tion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. Let us here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." It would be very difficult indeed to find a finer exposition of Paul's famous phrase, "baptized for the dead."—F. H. Boreham, in The Other Side of the Hill.

For Discussion. 1. The witnessing of Elijah's glorious departure evidently moved Elisha to triumphant faith. Witness his contemptuous irritation at the suggestions of search. Under what conditions would you accept this story as evidence of a future existence for Elijah? For yourself? Those who have looked into the eyes of a person who has "walked with God" at the moment when he consciously faces death, have in that moment received an impression which can be classed neither as evidence on which to found argument nor as an "Intimation of Immortality," but which remains as a powerful basis for an abiding faith. One feels in that moment that though the flesh is crumbling, something greater is mounting.

2. Elijahs who refuse to give up mantles and disciples who demand them too soon.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How was Elisha received by the sons of the prophets? 2. What miracles were done by Elisha? 3. For what purpose? 4. How, and why, did Elisha's ministry differ from that of Elijah's? 5. What qualities did the Shunammite woman show? 6. What did Jesus say about the one who received a prophet? (Mt. 10.40-42). 7. What was probably the cause of the child's death? 8. What did the woman's husband mean by his question in verse 23? 9. Did the mother mean to deceive when she told Gehazi "It is well," v. 26? 10. Why did Elisha command Gehazi to salute no one on his way to the dead child? 11. What scene in Christ's life does our text recall? 12. What was the main purpose of the writers of Kings and Chronicles? 13. From what point of view did they pass judgment upon the kings?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JEHOVAH'S CHAMPION EXALTED

Beginning the Lesson. "I am not ambitious to found a school or dwell in a palace," said a young pupil of Raphael; "but," he continued, "I am ambitious to catch Raphael's spirit, and reproduce in myself his ideals." Such is the ambition of Elisha, the pupil of Elijah, who has lived with his great master for some years and now is taking his last journey with him. Whither are they bound?

Jehovah's Champion Exalted. See The Text Explained and Illumined.

Sometimes this story of Elijah's going up to heaven is called "The Translation of Elijah." You have heard that word *translation* before. Perhaps you have often said, "I can't go; I have my translation to do." It may be French sentences which have to be translated into English, or it may be English sentences which have to be translated into some other language. When we change a word from one language to another we translate it. We change its appearance and its sound, but not its meaning.

In that part of the Church where they have men called bishops they sometimes translate them; that is, they move them from one district to another where they think they will be more useful. So Elijah was translated from one place to another—from earth to heaven. He went away from this world. He had finished his work here, and, no doubt, was given work to do elsewhere. Do we hear anything of him in the New Testament? Find the Gospel of Matthew, the seventeenth chapter, and read the first three verses. ("Elias" means Elijah.)

Elijah's was a very quick and strange translation. By and by, you know, you and I will be transferred from earth to heaven in a different way from Elijah, but just as truly. We are not going to come to an end, but only to go somewhere else. We call it dying, but it is only a change. We do not die any more than the caterpillar dies when it becomes a butterfly. We do not know what we shall look like when we are changed, but we believe that God who can make a beautiful butterfly out of a creeping caterpillar can make us into something very much more beautiful.—Grace Winter, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Elisha's Great Wish. When Elijah's mantle, the emblem of his authority as a prophet, fell to Elisha, that was Elisha's induction into the prophet's office. It is an interesting fact, by the way, that the insignia which graduates of certain colleges in England wear on appropriate occasions, the lambskin hood or cloak,

can be traced back to Elijah's mantle, which was the skin of some animal, dressed with the hair left on.

Elisha knew that to meet this new responsibility, to be prophet in the place of Elijah, he must be filled with the spirit and power of Elijah. "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me," had been his eager prayer. Not twice as much wisdom and authority as the father had, but the elder son's portion, twice as much as a younger son would receive, Elisha craved. The mantle was the symbol of the prophet, it could not make the prophet: Elisha would not possess the symbol of the prophet without the endowment of the prophet. Elisha's was a feebler nature than Elijah's, but his prayer was answered, he was enabled to carry on Elijah's work. The sons of the prophets recognized him as their new leader, they bowed themselves to the ground before him and they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

"I Wish his Mantle Might Fall upon Me." Elijah's mantle did not fall upon the shoulders of the waiting disciple, he had to stoop and pick it up, and turn it to his own use. The act was a necessary part of his successorship. From Elisha's act and words have come our proverb regarding the transference of unfinished tasks, the succession of the gifts of gifted men. The act is pictured in the Roman catacombs, showing that the early Christians in the loss of departed friends found consolation in the belief that God buries the workmen but carries on the work, raises up successors who may have more than ordinary ability to complete what has been begun. But though the successor may reap where another has sowed, he must toil to do it. "We often hear people saying of one whose gifts or graces they covet, 'I wish his mantle might fall upon me,'" observes Forward. "There are many desired 'mantles' that might be found and appropriated, but they do not fall upon any shoulders and fold around them without effort."

How to Gain the Great Master's Spirit. We turn to Christ's ascension, and we see no mantle falling upon any successor, for no one could step into his place, but we do hear the promise of power given to that waiting group of disciples. Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses. And at Pentecost we see that power bestowed. The elder son's portion was their's—and may be every one's.

A statue of a beautiful Greek slave-girl, neatly and becomingly dressed, once stood in the market place of Athens. A dirty, ragged slave-girl stopped and gazed at the statue in great wonderment. The next day she came again to gaze, but this time her face was washed and her hair was combed. On the third day her dress had been washed and mended. Day after day she stopped to look at the wonderful model, and day by day she imitated something she saw there till no one would have recognized in her the girl as first she was. So we may study and imitate our Great Model, catching more and more of his spirit from day to day, till we, too, are transformed.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Thou who art Light, shine on each soul!
Thou who art Truth, each mind control!
Open our eyes and make us see
The path which leads to heaven and thee!—John Hay.

"We can finish nothing in this life; but we may make a beginning, and bequeathe a noble example."

Pupils' Note-Book Work. II: Part 5. The Promotion of Elijah. Write the story as if told by one of the sons of the prophets at Jericho.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where did Elisha make his home? (2 K. 2.25; 5.3). 2. Tell the story of Elisha and the boys, 2 K. 2.23,24. 3. Tell the story of Elisha and the jars, 2 K. 4.1-7. 4. Where is Shunem? 5. Carmel? 6. What did the Shunammite woman provide for Elisha's comfort? 7. How did the Shunammite woman show a kindly heart? 8. Decision? 9. Initiative? 10. What later incident in regard to this woman is recorded in 2 K. 8.1-6? 11. Should people who have happy homes often share them with others? 12. What motives move people to hospitality? 13. What was the main purpose of the writers of Kings and Chronicles? 14. From what point of view did they pass judgment upon the kings?

ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN

Golden Text

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. John 5.25

LESSON 2 Kings 4.8-37 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 15.50-58
REFERENCE MATERIAL John 11.1-46

2 KINGS 4.18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went ou to his father to the reapers. 19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to his servant, Carry him to his mother. 20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out. 22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the servants, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to thrust her away; but the man of God said, Let her alone: for her soul is vexed within her; and Jehovah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

30 And the mother of the child said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. 33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto Jehovah. 34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon him: and the flesh of the child waxed warm. 35 Then he returned, and walked in the house once to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. HE THAT RECEIVETH A PROPHET IN THE NAME OF A PROPHET SHALL RECEIVE A PROPHET'S REWARD, verses 1-17. Elisha was a frequent visitor at Shunem, which lay on the road between Gilgal, where was a school of the prophets, and Carmel, the famous sanctuary. At Shunem there dwelt *a great woman,* a woman of wealth and influence, who gladly entertained the prophet at meals when he came to her village. She was sure that he was a holy man of God, and she induced her husband to build a chamber on their roof, and furnish it for the prophet. Grateful for her kindness, Elisha bade his servant Gehazi ascertain what he could do for her in return. Speak for her at court? he asked. She was content as she was, living with her own people, the woman told Gehazi. Childlessness is the greatest misfortune that can befall a woman in the East, and Gehazi told Elisha that the woman was childless. Calling her, Elisha assured her that she should have a son. And so it befell.

II. THE CHILD'S DEATH, verses 18-21. Years passed on. The child grew up. One day at harvest time the lad suffered a sunstroke, in this Valley of Esdraelon which "glows like a furnace in harvest time." *Carry him to his mother,* the helpless father ordered. "What am I to do with him?" another helpless father imagines his saying. "I don't know, I never did know, what to do with children. Here, take him to his mother, she will know!" By noon the child lay lifeless in his mother's arms. *She laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.*

III. THE MOTHER'S APPEAL TO ELISHA, verses 22-31. Elisha was at Carmel, about twelve miles away, and to him the stricken mother prepared

to go. Her husband wondered at her purpose in the journey, for, said he, it is *neither new moon nor sabbath;* the beginning of the month, the new moon, as well as the sabbath, was a time for offering sacrifices, all work ceased then (Amos 8.5), and *the servant and the asses,* the husband was doubtless thinking, could then be better spared. Without telling him the terrible truth, she gained her wish and hastened on her way. Elisha saw her making her way up the hill slope; something was wrong, he instinctively felt, and he hurried his servant Gehazi off to meet her. *Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?* Gehazi asked, much as we say to another, "How are you?" without expecting the one greeted to give us exact information as to his health. "How are you?" is a greeting, not a question.

The woman gave the customary answer, *It is well,* which was not intended to deceive;—she merely avoided wasting time in exchanging words with Gehazi, just as she had with her husband. When she came to Elisha, overcome with her grief, *she caught hold of his feet. Gehazi came near to thrust her away:* one naturally recalls the similar attitude of the disciples when they thought the Canaanitish woman was troubling their Master, Mt. 15.23. But Elisha stopped Gehazi. *Her soul is vexed within her,* said the man of God; *and Jehovah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Did I desire a son of my lord?* she cried, and the prophet knew that she had lost her boy. He bade Gehazi hasten and lay his prophet's staff on the face of the dead child, but the mother would not trust to such measures. *As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* Elisha followed her homeward, and on their way Gehazi met them, reporting that his efforts had been futile.

IV. THE PROPHET'S PRAYER AND WORKS, verses 32-35. After shutting the door *upon them twain,*—perhaps the prophet and the mother—Elisha prayed and then went to the upper chamber where he repeated Elijah's method with the widow's son, 1 K. 17.21. He sought to convey the warmth of his own body to that of the child, and to inflate his lungs. Then he *walked in the house to and fro,* no doubt to regain his natural warmth after contact with the child's cold body, and repeated his efforts. At last *the child sneezed, and opened his eyes.*

V. THE MOTHER'S GRATITUDE, verses 36-37. At Elisha's words, Gehazi called the mother. In gratitude too deep for words, she *bowed herself to the ground* before the prophet, and *took up her son, and went out.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

She constrained him to eat bread, verse 8. Village courtesy in the East requires that any one seen passing the door on a journey should be invited to enter for rest and refreshment. But the same spirit of courtesy that gives the invitation teaches the person invited to express thanks, excuse himself, and pass on. In the present instance, as the Hebrew word translated "constrained" indicates, the invitation was given with such pressure that the prophet could see it was sincerely meant.—Dr. George M. Mackie.

Let us make a little chamber on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a seat, and a candlestick, verse 10. The few khans, or inns, in Palestine today afford a traveller shelter but neither bedding nor food. A khan is only an empty room, where luggage may be stored on payment for "the use of the key." The traveller may cook his food in the open court, if he wishes. Many travellers lodge in the porches of the mosque, or in the mosque itself where mats are provided. In some mosques food is distributed towards sunset. It is said that a traveller once came to a mosque and receiving no food wrote above the door:

What was a mosque without victuals built for?

He found on his next journey this answer written:

It was built for prayer, O impudent fellow!

And then he wrote beneath:

The prayer can be said in the field; and let the mosque fall on the hand of its builder.

The "prophet's chamber" must have been very welcome to Elisha. It was built on the flat roof of the house and had its own stone steps leading up the outside wall of the house or along the wall of the court. Such guest chambers

are common now, especially in Jerusalem and Nablus (ancient Shechem).

She caught hold of his feet, verse 27. Even then he did not address her. So downtrodden was the position of women in the East that any dignified person, much more a great prophet, could not converse with a woman without compromising his dignity. The more scrupulous Pharisees in the days of Christ always carefully gathered up their garments in the streets, lest they should so much as touch a woman with their skirts in passing by, as do the modern Chakams in Jerusalem to this day. The disciples themselves, sophisticated by familiarity with such teachers, were astonished that Jesus at the well of Shechem should talk with a woman.—F. W. Farrar, in Expositor's Bible.

Oriental House with Upper Chamber

Send me one of the servants and one of the asses, verse 22. "Ladies of the high class in the East seldom walk, but almost always ride on asses. The rider is attended by a servant who runs behind, and, with a whip or stick, drives or goads the animal forward at whatever pace may be desired." The ass of Damascus is more valuable than the ordinary horse, and travels rapidly.

It is neither new moon nor Sabbath, verse 23. The new moon was especially a woman's holiday, and was so observed even in the Middle Ages, for the women refrained from doing work on that day. The explanation given by the rabbis is that when the men broke off their golden earrings to supply material for the golden calf the women refused to contribute their trinkets, for which good behavior a special day of repose was granted to them.—Professor Schechter, Studies.

It is well. . . . She caught hold of his feet, verses 26,27. This scene is natural and very graphic. If you ask after a person whom you know to be sick, the reply at first will invariably be, "Well, thank God," even when the very next sentence is to inform you that he is dying. Then the falling down, clasping the feet, etc., are actions witnessed every day. I have had this done to me often before I could prevent it.—Thomson, The Land and the Book.

Take my staff, verse 29. The walking staff that every traveler used to help him on his way. *Salute him not.* He must not take the time for lengthy salutations, then and now customary in the East. Orientals have no idea of the value of time. They are not content on meeting to exchange a word of greeting, but they utter many repetitions to the accompaniment of tedious bowing and posturing. Canon Tristram in Eastern Customs in Bible Lands, describes the scene:

"You may be hurrying to your pre-arranged camping ground or village, and the sun is rapidly nearing the western horizon. Your dragoman recognizes a traveller whom you meet, or, it may be, accosts an entire stranger. The greeting commences by a reciprocal invocation of peace. Both halt. The conversation proceeds in a series of meaningless inquiries after health, welfare of all the kinsfolk. Then it gradually slides into inquiries as to whence each started in the morning, and their destination for the night, with ejaculations of 'Allah be praised!' and the like, after each reply. You impatiently sit on your horse a few yards in advance, but you turn, and see them composing themselves to sit down on the wayside, while they interchange all the small gossip of their respective villages, and the various rumors of the bazaars, in which employment

ten minutes is easily wasted. And the sun is setting ere your loitering guide comes up to you again."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What miracles were wrought by Elijah? For what purpose?

Stories about Elisha. Most of the stories told about Elisha show him as a man of generous, kindly heart, who uses his God-given powers for the benefit of others.

His first recorded act was the giving of pure water to the people of Jericho. The so-called "Elisha's fountain" is still pouring forth sweet water. Passing on to Bethel, he was taunted by a troup of boys, who cried out, "Go up, thou baldhead." (Elisha's short hair, or shorn head, was in striking contrast to Elijah's long, shaggy locks.) Whereupon forty-two of the boys were torn to pieces by two bears who appeared on the scene from the nearby woods.

Later in the Wilderness of Edom the armies of the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom, who had united their forces against the forces of the king of Moab, were in distress for lack of water. Jehoshaphat appealed to Elisha, and the latter obtained water for them in abundance, and prophesied their victory.

Still another story is that the two sons of the widow of one of the prophets were to be sold for debt. Elisha bade her procure all the jars she could and fill them from the one jar of oil in her possession. The oil lasted till all the jars were filled, and its sale freed her from debt.

Elisha and the Shunammite Woman. "It fell on a day," is the way in which our story begins. Places are given, but dates are wanting for any accurate arrangement of events in Elisha's life. Elisha lived in the ninth century B. C.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

During his ministry of half a century, Elisha seems to have made his home in Samaria, and to have traveled extensively around the neighboring country. He was on Mount Carmel when the Shunammite woman sought him. Recall our third lesson.

A village by the name of *Shunem,* located on the southern slope of Little Hermon, in the Plain of Esdraelon, is famous as the home of the maiden who is the heroine of the Song of Songs, and as the place occupied by the Philistines before the battle of Gilboa in which King Saul lost his life. It seems probable that the Shunem of our lesson was between Samaria and Carmel.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

It is probable that your teaching of this particular lesson will be interrupted by some member of the class who is interested in the credibility of Bible miracles. It challenges such a discussion. If you are thereby diverted, the application which is your aim in teaching this lesson will be lost. If you suppress the discussion, you may lose influence with your class, who may infer that you are evading the issue.

One way to avoid the dilemma is to appoint a time—perhaps the last five minutes of the lesson period—in which you will discuss the matter. Be ready to cite one or more authorities for the position you hold. Whenever a question comes up in class on which you are not well informed, put in "on the table" till the next week. Do not fail then to give the references for your point of view, which your pastor will readily give you, if necessary.

An able teacher inspires mental as well as spiritual vitality, and needs to know how to requite what he incites without losing control of the choice of the lesson goal. This often calls for considerable good feeling and tact.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
A MINISTRY OF COMFORT AND HELP

Beginning the Lesson. Elisha can not be called great in the sense that Elijah was great, and he left no such enduring impression on the memory of succeeding generations as did Elijah. Elijah, strong and stern and uncom-

promising, was needed to recall the king and the people to the worship of the true God; but Elisha, kindly and helpful and patient, was needed to sustain them in the troublesome times that followed, when the Syrians came down like wolves on the fold. Elijah was the austere man of the wilderness; Elisha was the son of a prosperous farmer. Elijah lived aloof from the people; Elisha was one of them. Elijah was always in opposition to king and people; Elisha was their friendly counselor. Elijah was full of fiery zeal for the Lord; Elisha was the man of faith and vision, the holy man of God.

Many wonder-works are ascribed to Elisha, some of them unlike most of the miracles recorded in the Bible. In truth, almost all we know about him is told in a succession of miraculous deeds of beneficence. "Why should it not be true," questions Dr. Maclaren, "that after Elijah had proclaimed the truth, his successor's function was to enforce it chiefly by his acts, and to seek to draw Israel back to God by the 'cords of love' and the gentle compulsion of mercies?"

"A Great Woman." Those who have read Ecce Homo may recall the author's affirmation that Christianity, inasmuch as no century of its history had failed to have some one disciple of Jesus who illumined it by a nobility of life, by personal purity and righteousness, had shown power for permanence and continued influence with growing dominance. In like confidence it may be affirmed that the centuries of human history have ever been illumined by some woman who lived and served her generation so worthily as to achieve greatness as did the Shunammite, albeit the few only won abiding record.

The earlier Scriptures are enriched by what is related of Sarah, of Rachel, of Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Naomi, and Ruth; the later Writings by the story of Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptizer; of Mary Magdalene; of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ; of the helpers of Paul, Priscilla, Persis, and Phebe; of Lois and Eunice, whose unfeigned faith made them wise for mothering Timothy and fitting him for a remarkable career.

Some women are dynamic. They have commerce with the Infinite One; they speak with the Life-Giver. Thus are they strong to meet disaster, the jarring blows that befall. At times they win vantage and break the grip of disease and are unafraid of death. Boldly, bravely they hold their beloved and endangered to the healing touch of the mighty God. They venture far in supplication and readily make full use of clear-visioned men of faith and prayer, as the Shunammite constrained Elisha to potent service.

None can read of the night scene when The Battle Hymn of the Republic was hastily penned by a woman through whose being the lines flowed with flame of impelling inspiration, without awakening a kindred glow. The flaming lines retain their native splendor, their sacred burden of teaching and inspiring force. The hymn has its unwasting dynamic because a dynamic woman created it. Kipling dares to sing of a mother great enough to pray an errant, condemned son free from such grim holding even though she saw him in the awful welter of the abyss.

It is also fair and just to credit Julia Ward Howe, Frances Willard, Lois Parker, and diminutive Mary Stone of China with greatness. Other names come thronging, and a host of nameless women also, who by deeds of daring, of mercy, of faith, and love must be given high rank, and whose real, luminous record is with their Maker and Lord.—Condensed from an article in the Zion's Herald, by Otis Cole.

The Shunammite's Ministry of Comfort.

A little chamber built upon the wall,
With stool, and table, candlestick, and bed,
Where he might sit, or kneel, or lay his head,
At night or sultry noontide; this was all
A prophet's need: but in that chamber small
What mighty prayers arose, what grace was shed;
What gifts were given, potent to wake the dead,
And from its viewless flight a soul recall!
And still what miracles of grace are wrought
In many a lonely chamber with shut door,
Where God our Father is in secret sought,
And shows himself in mercy more and more!
Dim upper-rooms with God's own glory shine,
And souls are lifted to the life Divine.—R. Wilton.

Sympathy a Mark of a Man of God. All through the times described in our lessons the idea of God was expanding, and the thought of the man of God had to expand also. When God was conceived of as the source of wonders, the worker of wonders was the man of God. When God was thought of as a great hero, the heroic man was the man of God. In any case, the man of God was the most like God. As we look back at the story of Elisha we see that Elisha was even more like God than the people of the time may have thought, and likest God in the most human of his qualities. The people of Elisha's time saw likeness to God in the possession of marvelous powers—and hence we have this story of a marvel. We see likeness to God in Elisha's quick response to human need, and we gladly preserve the story, not because of the marvel, but because of the tenderness of Elisha and his warmth of sympathy. The Book of Kings is full of stories of Elisha the wonder-worker, but we admire Elisha for his deep human interests. For us these are the divine features in the story. We must utilize to the full this thought of the character of Elisha as his claim to the title of man of God. We are too slow in claiming the highest and best in men as divine. There is still too much of the emphasis on the merely wonderful. Today the man who is really most of a man is the man of God. A man cannot really be a man without being a man of God. It is part of the charm of the Scriptures, then, that their heroes can be admired by us today for reasons somewhat different from those which called forth admiration in the first place. The people heard that Elisha had used miraculous power in aid of the Shunammite woman, and the historian set down the story, thinking that surely Elisha was a man of God. We read the story and see its deep kindliness and say that the writer wrote better than he knew, for surely quick, compassionate sympathy is the mark of a man of God.—Bishop McConnell, in the Sunday School Journal.

Sickness and Prayer. There is a small section of life the laws of which we know; there we must do our utmost to fulfill those laws. But outside this small section there is an immense region the laws of which we do not yet know; there we progress by trusting God. My child is sick—it is my first duty to apply the remedies discovered out of the agony of the ages, garnered from the labor and research of the past. But outside this small known section of light there is the great dim stretch of the unknown. The connection of the child's soul with mine, the connection of the child's soul with God, the connection of the child's soul with its own body, the plan of the child's life in the universe—these and countless other things about the child I do not know. I therefore pray, and as I pray I feel my way out into the dimness and perchance feel another hand grasp mine out there. I have done all I can—God now takes up the burden.—Dr. J. Edgar Park.

For Discussion. 1. You can not delegate to others the work God means for you.

2. The staff in Gehazi's hands, and "relics" in the Roman Catholic Church.

3. "The Lord hath hid it from me": the answer to countless questions in regard to the Scriptures.

4. The wife of a college professor told me that important as had been the influence of the college in molding the life of her sons, the influence of the ministers who had come to preach to the students and had been entertained in her home was even more important. This woman knew the reward of the prophet's chamber. There are prophets of many sorts in the world, and every one who has a message at all is worth being received into the home, and being given a hearing in the family circle.—Bishop McConnell.

5. Elisha the Imitative. See chapter in Matheson's Representative Men.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the great difference between the missions of Elijah and Elisha? 2. How could Naaman cross the Jordan with his chariots? 3. Why did the King of Israel think that the King of Syria sought a quarrel with him? 4. What were the Jewish laws regarding leprosy? (Lev. 13.14; Dt. 24.8; 2 Ch. 26.21). 5. What had Naaman expected the prophet to do, and why had he expected this? 6. Why did Elisha send his curt directions to Naaman? 7. Why was Naaman sent to wash in the Jordan? 8. What are the outstanding lessons to be gained from the healing of Naaman? 9. For what purpose did Jesus recall the healing of Naaman? (Lk. 4.27). 10. Why did Elisha refuse Naaman's gifts?

11. Gehazi sold his master's honor for his own profit: was his punishment justified? 12. What traits does Elisha show in this lesson? 13. Of what books are Kings a continuation? 14. With what history does First Kings begin?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE PROPHET'S SERVICE TO A HOME

Beginning the Lesson.

"The work goes on, perchance in other ways,
But surely as the nights do follow days—
The work goes on."

So Elijah's work went on, but in quite other ways. See the first paragraph of the preceding topic.

Elisha Helping in the Home.

There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fire-side, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair.

Do you know who wrote these lines? Sooner or later Longfellow's words come true in every household. They were true of the Shunammite's home. See Text Explained.

Motives for Hospitality. To give comfort to those who need it, to serve those whom we respect or admire. To get pleasure from companionship with friends. To bring together people who ought to meet. To gain social prestige. To get invitations or other recompense for ourselves.

Which of these motives are good? Which are innocent? Which are unworthy?

"And that which I took for warm heart's flow
Was merely an interchange—*quid pro quo.*"

What seems to have been the motive of the Shunammite woman's offer of hospitality to Elijah? What did she do for him? How did he seek to reward her?

The Prophet's Acceptance of the Shunammite's Hospitality. The situation is typical of good social relations. She esteemed the prophet; she sought a way to serve him. The prophet formed the habit of accepting, perhaps even claiming, her hospitality. The more she saw of him the better she thought of him; she had an intimate conversation on the subject with her husband, who was moved by her opinion and desires; they gave the prophet a room into which he might come freely, by an outside stair, and put into it only essentials. The prophet deputed Gehazi to find out tactfully how to requite her. She protested any need for what Gehazi suggested—we can imagine with what courtesy and assurance that the pleasure was hers. Elisha and Gehazi talked it over, and Gehazi suggested a real and evident need; Elisha acted on the idea, which overpowered the "great" woman, and she frankly showed her feeling.

When you have received and requited hospitality, is the ledger balanced and the incident closed? Not in a rightly constituted society. This is the way *friendships* are formed. The woman was sick and the prophet poor; the prophet was revered and the Shunammite was only a woman; they were not in the same *class*. But in friendship each knows his right to offer service, and each acknowledges the service when rendered.

Modern Hospitality. Before any railways penetrated the Allegheny Mountains, many poor emigrants in wagons and on horse-back travelled the National Road to the wildernesses beyond the Ohio River. Inns were few. Several of the wealthy planters in Maryland and Virginia erected near to the road cabins on their land in which were comfortable beds and a fireplace for the gratuitous use of these unknown people at night. They were marked "Traveller's Rest," and were left open and unguarded. None of the little comforts with which they were provided were ever stolen. Sometimes the tired travellers scrawled with charcoal on the wall before they went on their way a word of thanks to the kind hosts whose faces they would never see.

Few readers of these lines will probably ever have a chance to show kindness in these ways. But there are other kinds of hospitality. One's life is something

like one of these plantations. One parcels it out; so much space is given to tillage, to study, to research; so much to business; so much to his home and family ties. But is there no little place in it for pure hospitality? The hour, the five minutes each day in which one brings into some stranger's life strength and cheer? We fulfill our duty, perhaps, to father, brother and friend. What space is given the unknown traveller who passes us by?—The Youth's Companion.

The Closed Home Door. "Ethelwynne Davenport! If there isn't Miss Ann Eunice Talbot coming down the path! I could just cry! She'll stay to lunch, and stay to dinner, and we'll be lucky if we get rid of her at bed-time. And all the while she'll rock and rock and drizzle and drizzle about her feelings and her friendlessness and her hard times until you feel as if you were entertaining a November storm. It's bad enough when mother is home,—mother lets herself be imposed on by all the people nobody else will put up with,—but I didn't think she'd come when mother was away."

Ethelwynne peered through the half-closed blinds at the small, limp figure below. "She doesn't look stimulating," she acknowledged, "but it strikes me the situation is easily met. Why answer the bell?"

For a moment Janet's startled eyes met her cousin's saucy ones; then she yielded with a sigh of relief.

"You're a genius, Wynne. Why didn't I ever think of it myself? If only she won't suspect—"

Apparently Miss Ann did not suspect. She knocked a few times in a discouraged way, and then went slowly down the path without a backward look, and in two minutes the girls had forgotten all about her. Ethelwynne's visit was to be only a week, and it would have been a shame to lose a day of it.

Five days later, as Janet turned from waving her cousin off, a neighbor met her. "Did you know Miss Ann Talbot has had an operation?" she asked. "Last week. Poor soul! It was dismal business, with not a soul belonging to her. She's at Garfield Hospital."

Last week! Janet stood with the words echoing in her heart. Last week, and she had closed the door!

Stopping only to buy an armful of roses, she signaled a car and hurried to the hospital. Fortunately it was visiting hours, and she was taken up to the ward where Miss Ann lay. Her white face brightened when she saw the girl.

"I guess you don't know what it is to see you, child!" the weak voice said. "I went round the day before I came here. Seemed as if I could only sit in your mother's room a few minutes I'd *feel* her, and it wouldn't be so hard. But nobody was home. I dunno when I ever felt so. There, child, don't feel so bad—it's all over, and everything's come out well. And those roses—you're just like your mother, Janet." The girl turned away sharply. That was the hardest of all.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. In the battle of life we cannot hire a substitute.—Harold Bell Wright.

There is no good in praying for anything unless you will also try for it.—Henry van Dyke.

Wherever a human being exists, there is an opportunity to do a kindness.—Seneca.

"Say not, 'God help you!' when your brother needs,
But let God help him through your kindly deeds."

Pupils' Note-Book Work. III: The Life of Elisha: Part I. The Story of the Shunammite, as told by herself.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where is Syria? 2. Samaria? 3. Damascus? 4. The Jordan? 5. What is leprosy? 6. How did Naaman hear of Elisha? 7. What may we learn from the little captive maid? 8. Describe Naaman's journey from Damascus to Samaria. 9. What did Naaman mean by his question in verse 12? 10. What are the Abana and Pharpar rivers called today? 11. Why was Naaman angry? 12. If Naaman had not given up his pride, what would have happened? 13. Do we ever forfeit worthwhile things because of our pride? 14. What blind beggar was told by Jesus to wash in a pool and his sight would be restored? (Jn. 9.7). 15. Of what books are Kings a continuation? 16. With what history does First Kings begin?

ELISHA AND NAAMAN THE SYRIAN

Golden Text

Bless Jehovah, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases. Psalm 103.2,3

LESSON 2 Kings 5.1-27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.1-12
REFERENCE MATERIAL Luke 4.16-30; 5.12-16

2 KINGS 5.1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, *but he was* a leper. 2 And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy. 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14 Then went he down, and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE CURE SUGGESTED BY A CAPTIVE MAIDEN, verses 1-3. *Now Naaman, captain of the host* of Benhadad, the *King of Syria,* was highly esteemed by *his master, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria.* "Possibly the enemies from whom the Syrians had been saved were the Assyrians. Naaman, in delivering his countrymen from them, had been an unconscious instrument in the hands of Jehovah" (Dummelow). *He was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.* Notice that the words *but he was* are in italics, showing that they are not in the original Hebrew. Evidently in Syria there were no such laws regarding lepers as were in force among the Israelites: see Lev. 13.14; Dt. 24.8; 2 Ch. 26.21. "Naaman's leprosy had come in a form that did not involve exclusion from society. It was the white leprosy, which is one of the most slowly developing forms of the disease. In this particular form the leprosy is all under the skin, and the disease, which may run its course for more than twenty years, results in the end in an utter absence of feeling—unless it changes its form in the later stages and becomes virulent and loathsome" (Ainsworth). Our newspapers just announce that a cure for leprosy has been found. May the report prove true!

Nominally the Syrians and Israelites were at peace, yet plundering parties of Syrians had invaded Israel and brought back as slave *a little maiden* who *waited on Naaman's wife.* Pitying her master, the Israelitish maiden expressed a wish that he might see the prophet in Samaria who would heal him.

II. THE LETTER OF THE SYRIAN KING, verses 4-6. Her words were

reported to Naaman's *lord*, the king of Syria, who at once directed Naaman to go to Samaria with a letter from him to the king of Israel. Naaman went, taking with him presents of gold and silver (together valued at over $80,000) and *ten changes of raiment.* The first part of the letter, complimentary, of course, is not repeated here: the conclusion read, *I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.*

An Assyrian Letter Written in the Time of Abraham. On the Clay Envelope are the Name of the Person Addressed and the Seal of the Writer. The Broken Top Shows the Letter Within.

III. THE PERTURBATION OF THE ISRAELITISH KING, verse 7. In great dismay the king of Israel, when *he had read the letter, rent his clothes and said, am I God, to kill and to make alive?* He could only conclude that the king of Syria was seeking a quarrel with him, a pretext for attacking him. "Just as the displacement of a pebble may set an avalanche in motion, so the words of a simple child started an action which might have involved two kingdoms in war." The letter of the king of Syria was in truth a lordly letter. It seemed to say, as another expresses it: 'Here is gold by the bagful, and gorgeous clothing—a whole wardrobe of it; get that secret healing force of yours into action. I command it.'"

IV. ELISHA'S MESSAGE TO NAAMAN, verses 9,10. Elisha heard of the king's dismay and offered his services. It was not only the king's honor that was at stake, but the honor of Israel's God. *Let* Naaman *come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.* When Naaman appeared before his door, coming with all pomp possible, with *his chariots and his horses,* the prophet did not honor Naaman by coming out and speaking personally with him. Instead, he sent a messenger with the brief direction, *Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.* Compare Jesus' direction to the man at the pool of Siloam, Jn. 6.7, and the law in Lev. 13.17. At the present day a plunge into the Jordan River is far from being a health-giving rite. After American Red Cross physicians analyzed the water and found in it many germs of skin diseases and other maladies, the local authorities for the first time in history restricted bathing in the river.

V. NAAMAN'S ANGER, verses 11,12. Naaman thought he was treated with scant courtesy and *he went away* in anger. He had thought, he said, that the prophet would come out to him and *call on the name of Jehovah his God* (he believed that each country had its own god), *and wave his hand over the place,* as heathen sorcerers would do, *and recover the leper.* And he added, disgustedly, no doubt, *Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?* "In this Naaman no doubt spoke the truth. Very few persons have ever made much of the Jordan, considered as scenery, but the whole Israelitish conception of the land of the chosen people turned round the idea that Israel, insignificant as it might appear, took its worth from connection with spiritual forces. It is as if a student of history might say that Bunker Hill is taller than Pike's Peak. As a matter of fact, Bunker Hill is not even much of a hill, but of course we would at once understand the meaning of a historian in such an utterance. He would have in mind the larger historical significance of the famous battlefield. So the teachers of Israel strove always to impress upon all minds the spiritual superiority of everything pertaining to Israel. We may say that it was rather a crude way to teach Naaman the supremacy of Israel's religion—this requirement that he must plunge himself beneath the waters of the Jordan because Jordan happened to be a sacred river. If we left out of the account, however, all the religious progress of the world that has come through crude steps, we would not have much left (Bishop McConnell).

VI. NAAMAN HUMBLED AND HEALED, verses 13,14. As Naaman was turning away *in a rage, his servants,* probably his officers, approached and addressing him as *My father,* the customary title of honor and affection, said,

If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then he went down from Samaria to the Jordan, a distance of twenty miles, *and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan.* He learned that God is no respecter of persons, that if he was to be healed it was as a leper and not as a great man from Damascus, and that he must obey the word of God as it came to him through the prophet. When he laid aside his pride and obeyed, *his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.* "It was not the *water* either of Jordan or of Abana which could heal; it was the *obedience* of this haughty general to a mandate which seemed to him frivolous and absurd. In the Gospels *faith* is the first requisition in similar cases of healing, and so it was here also—faith and obedience" (Schaff).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He took with him silver and gold and changes of raiment, verse 5. It was customary to take valuable gifts to anyone of whom a favor was sought. "Hardly any transaction of importance can take place in the East without a gift," says James M. Freeman. "The formal visits which friends make to each other are preceded by presents of fowls, sheep, rice, coffee, and other provisions. A refusal to receive a present is, throughout the East, interpreted as an evidence of enmity. Hence Jacob's anxiety that Esau should accept the gift he offered."

Especially valued were the changes of raiment, for in the East fashions of dress do not change as with us. In inventories of a man's wealth the costly garments are included. It is said of a noted oriental poet of the ninth century that "he had so many presents made him during his life-time that at his death he had one hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts and five hundred turbans."

That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy, verse 6. Many remedies were already practised by the people, and there was apparently a body of healers or physicians. Compare the frequent use of the term *to heal* in metaphor. But on the part of the orthodox a strong feeling existed against physicians who did not associate their healing with the ceremonies enjoined by the Law; and it is clear that the priests were regarded as experts in medicine. See the various Levitical laws on leprosy, with the implication that the priests could destroy the various kinds of it: compare 2 Ch. 16.12. Greek physicians were probably the first in Jewish experience who used no religious formula in their art.—George Adam Smith, in Jerusalem.

Seven times, verse 10. In this particular the command would probably not seem strange to Naaman. Chaldean magic tablets show that incantations had to be repeated seven times, and Naaman was expecting to be cured in some such way.

If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? verse 13. "Would you not? Swung at the end of a pole, with hooks in your back; measured all the way from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, lying down on your face and rising at each length; done a hundred things which heathen and Roman Catholics and unspiritual Protestants think are the way to get salvation."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What association has Damascus with the name of Paul, as we learned in our lessons last year? Where is Damascus? How old is the city?

The Date of this Lesson. Elisha's ministry extended throughout the reigns of four kings, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Joash. Because he was on friendly terms with the king of Israel mentioned in our lesson, it is thought that the king was Jehoram, who reigned from 851 to 842 B. C.

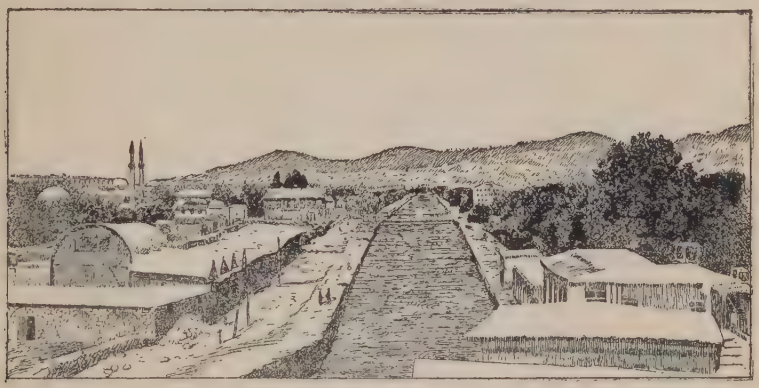
THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Syria is the name given today to the region between Asia Minor and Egypt, and includes Palestine. In the time of our lesson Palestine was not a part of Syria.

Damascus, Syria's chief city, lies in the plain east of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. It was hoary with age before the dawn of recorded history. In Naaman's day it was the commercial center of a large district, the center of an immense caravan traffic, and famous for its wealth and beauty.

Damascus is supposed to have served as a model for the paradise described in the Mohammedan Koran. Today there are more than two hundred mosques in the city. It is interesting to be told that the Mosque of the Ommiads was formerly the Christian Church of St. John which was built in the fifth century on the ruins of a Greek temple, the successor, according to legend, of "the house of Rimmon," where Naaman worshipped his god in the eighth century before Christ. On the outskirts of the city is a collection of huts known as the Naaman House of Lepers.

It was a long journey which Naaman took in his chariot from Damascus to Samaria. We may think of him as following the Abana towards its source, then



The Abana River, Damascus

driving down along the Upper Jordan from its source to the Sea of Chinnereth, around the eastern side of that little lake and down the Lower Jordan Valley a short distance, till he crossed the Jordan and went westward through the Valley of Jezreel into Samaria.

The question naturally arises, how did he cross the Jordan in his chariot? This is Dr. George Adam Smith's answer: "Till the Romans came there were no bridges in Palestine. Like the name for port, the name for bridge does not occur in the Old Testament, probably because the thing itself was quite unknown. It is unlikely that chariots were driven across the river, for the shallowest ford there is three feet deep, and the bottom very muddy. Either the body of the chariot was floated over as baggage is still floated by inflated skins, or else such ferry-boats existed as Cæsar found in use on the rivers of Gaul."

Most striking is the contrast between the Jordan and the Abana. On going from one to the other I thought Naaman's question justified. The Jordan is a very swift river, the Lower Jordan falling 610 feet in 65 miles, and it is consequently loaded with sediment, while the Abana is clear.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

The novel usually differs from the short story not only in its length but in its complexity. In addition to the main story and the main characters, it usually contains a number of secondary characters and several subordinate plots. These Bible stories have the virtues of both these types of writing. They move rapidly and directly, and yet they suggest colorful contributory stories and lessons. Today the subordinate story of the little maiden in a foreign land is one that will appeal with much force to younger classes.

Once in a while you may find it profitable to ask your class two weeks in advance to read carefully the entire lesson, with the connection between it and the last lesson, together with the "Devotional Reading" and the "Reference Material" given by our Lesson Committee, and from this Biblical material to make a

list of topics each of which might be the central thought for the class discussion. From the topics offered, the week following let the class decide which one shall be chosen, and each member will feel a definite responsibility for meditating upon the theme during the week and taking part in its discussion.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
OVERCOMING NATIONAL AND RACIAL PREJUDICE

Beginning the Lesson. For a long time the kings of England were credited with the power of healing scrofula. A book in the University Library of Cambridge, England, contains a picture of Edward the Confessor touching a scrofulous woman; and one of the treasures of the Library of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Westminster, is "Queen Mary's Manual" in which there is a picture of Queen Mary touching a scrofulous boy. Charles II is said to have touched more than ninety thousand persons in the course of nineteen years, many sufferers going to him from our own land. William III, according to Macaulay, "had too much sense to be duped, and too much honesty to bear a part in what he knew to be an imposture." On one occasion he remarked to an applicant for his healing touch, "God give you better health and more sense." This healing prerogative of the kings died a natural death only on the accession of the House of Hannover.

In our story today the king of Israel receives a letter demanding the healing of a leper. Who was the leper? Who wrote the letter? Why?

The Prejudice of Greatness. How plainly we can see this great man, Naaman, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian armies, coming in all his pomp and splendor to the humble door of Elisha the prophet and expecting to be treated "like a great man that happened to be a leper, while Elisha treated him like a leper who happened to be a great man"! He was angry because Elisha sent directions to him by a messenger instead of coming out to see himself, and because the directions were so simple. Physicians today tell a wealthy patient that all he needs is fresh air, regular exercise, simple food, and abundant sleep, and the patient, like Naaman, is wroth. Behold I thought, he says, that he would give me powerful medicines, order me to see some noted specialist, or prescribe a trip to some foreign baths, and he tells me to walk and eat and sleep! And he, too, goes away in a rage.

"My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" With this question Naaman's attendants bring him to his senses. He has already done the great thing, he has taken the long journey to see the prophet—and has brought many thousands of dollars with which to pay for his cure; now let him try the simple thing that Elisha orders, and go and wash in the Jordan seven times.

The Prejudice against Doing Small Things. "I have come to see you," he said, "about a class of boys in the Sunday-school. They have recently lost their teacher, and I wish you would take them." Thus a minister spoke to Judge Andrews, the most learned lawyer in the State.

"What! I take a class of boys in the Sunday-school!"

"Yes, sir. You could hold the boys. They all respect you greatly. You have no idea what a hero you are to them."

"But—but—I teach a class of boys! No, no, I could not! It's a very busy term of court."

"But it is the busy people, judge, who do the best work, and we need a splendid teacher for that class. Won't you try it?"

"Couldn't think of it. No, no, I couldn't possibly." And the judge closed the interview rather abruptly.

But Sunday morning the minister was surprised to receive a call from Judge Andrews. He began with strange hesitation: "I have called to say that—I would try that class. I thought it all out after you left. It was sheer pride that made me refuse. I thought I was too great a man to teach a class of little boys. I tell you, sir, I am a hypocrite. I have tried to play the 'distinguished Christian gentleman,' and I have been worthless in the Kingdom. Put me to work. I do not know how to teach little boys. I am too ignorant. But I mean to learn."

At the close of his first year in the Sunday-school, Judge Andrews said to the minister: "Teaching that class has been the greatest thing that ever happened

to me. I never had any definition of service before. I shall never cease to thank God for opening my eyes to see myself as I really was."—The Youth's Companion.

The Prejudice of Preconceived Ideas as to how God Must Work. Naaman had heard of a prophet in Israel who could cure leprosy. He had thought out how it would be done: the prophet would come to him, assume a striking attitude, wave his hand over the leprous spot as he called upon the name of his God, and lo, the leprosy would disappear. "There is a similar absurdity of preconception in religious thinking," writes Joseph Parker. "The great mistake that we have made is that we have set our inventiveness to work, and we have said, God must be thus and so. The connection between God and man must be of this and that nature and limitation. Thus, without the slightest authority beyond what may be involved in our own consciousness, we have constructed a plan of the universe, a method of government, a system of providence, and therefore anything that opposes our preconceptions encounters in all its fulness the action of a personal prejudice."

The fundamental mistake which many adults are inclined to make in regard to their salvation is that, like Naaman, they want to be healed in their own way. They have preconceived notions of what must first take place before they can expect to attain salvation. Perchance they cannot accept this or that statement about the Bible or in the Bible, and they will take no step in the direction of the Jordan until this difficulty is cleared up. To such God may be saying all the time, Yonder is a poor man whom you can help by a visit or a loan; here is a woman who sorely needs your sympathy; next door is a child whom you can influence and turn back from the wrong path in which he has started; you have been cherishing ill-will against this one, forgive him; you are needed as Sunday-school treasurer—take up this task; do this or that small thing and then the next small thing for me, and together we can proceed to greater things, even to a better understanding of the hidden things of the Scriptures. God heals in his own way, and he has different methods for different persons.

The Prejudice of Exclusiveness Today. It has taken humanity a long time to grow out of this idea; remnants of this doctrine of a provincial God are still found everywhere. In America today, owing to the influx of a great mass of foreign people with their strange ideals and stranger ways, the American of native birth or longer residence is inclined to raise the old question concerning the claim of the alien upon his God. He does not quite know that he is raising this question; he scarcely understands how deep are the roots of this theological selfishness in his soul; but, as a matter of fact, the feeling is there, and before he is aware of it, he has let it come to expression.

Are immigrants welcome in our churches? Do we not really treat them as without full rights in our God, when we work for them in "missions"? Would a group of Italians be really welcomed in every Sunday-school? Would a class of Slovak girls be made a part of a church without dissent? Are we truly the followers of the Christ of all the nations and tongues?—Dr. Ozora S. Davis.

For Discussion. 1. Compare the pride of Naaman with the pride of Elisha. Of what was each one proud? Barriers of national pride and suspicion were overcome twice in this story—in the asking and in the giving. Is pride of family justifiable? When? What about pride of wealth? Was Elisha's pride national, tribal, or religious? Are we justified in feeling national pride? Why?

2. "Naaman a type of the rationalist whose philosophy provides him with *a priori* dogmas by which he measures everything which is proposed to his faith."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Is Elisha remembered for his help in national, or in personal affairs? 2. What does this lesson show about his position in the nation? 3. Who were the King of Syria and the King of Israel mentioned in our lesson? 4. How did the King of Syria show his childish thinking? 5. What does Paul say in Rom. 8.31 which the 16th verse of our lesson recalls? 6. In what words did Hezekiah utter the same thought? (2 Ch. 32.7,8). 7. What does Ps. 27.1 say? 8. Which are more powerful, the visible or the invisible powers of this world? 9. What do you think about "The Companion in White" told about during the Great War? 10. How did God fight against Napoleon at Moscow? 11. Does our Golden Text mean that Christians will always be spared physical discomfort? 12. What does

it mean? 13. What does faith in the unseen do for us? 14. How far do the Books of Kings carry the history? 15. How many centuries do they cover?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
ELISHA HELPING A FOREIGNER

Beginning the Lesson. "Now Naaman," our story begins: who was Naaman? What was his reputation? What victory had he won for his country? Who gave him the victory? Did Naaman worship Jehovah? How, then, can it be said that Jehovah gave him the victory? There was some one in his home from the land of Israel: who? What was she doing? How did she happen to be there? What did she tell her mistress one day? Who was the prophet?

Elisha Helping a Foreigner. Few figures in the Old Testament impress us with a more living and human interest than that of Naaman the Syrian. He appears as one of the first gentlemen of Damascus, and Damascus was the Paris of the ancient East. He was wealthy, famous, victorious; popular alike with the king and his servants, beloved and happy in his home. Yet upon him had come the terrific doom of leprosy. He sets off on the long journey to Israel for a cure. He finds the king pusillanimous, and the prophet haughty. He sees only a servant and receives directions to wash in their river. Then the leper is forgotten and the great official remembered. He had expected pomp and circumstance befitting his dignity, and his anger rises at this inhospitable land and its unmannerly ways and its despised waters. In fierce reaction the weary and disappointed man turns back in thought to the beautiful streams in his home land. But does Abana deal with the tragedy of disease and misery and sin? Ah, no, he must humble himself and obey the haughty prophet.

There are two sides to Elisha. His lifelong kindness to all sons of the prophets, and the stories of the poor women of Zarepta and of Shunem, reveal a great tenderness beneath his shaggy simplicity. Yet his usual aspect is that of unrelenting sternness.

In this story he appears in a peculiarly distant and formal aspect. He heals, but without so much as looking at the sick man. He stands utterly apart and repulses all attempts at familiarity. He refuses the gifts of the grateful Naaman. It is Jordan and not Elisha that takes his sickness away from Naaman. Nothing could be less sympathetic or less kindly than this cold, immaculate, and patronizing deed. With Naaman, at least, "never dares the man put off the prophet." Austere, faultless, and aloof, he plays his impersonal part in the life of Naaman, a bloodless statue of righteousness.—Adapted from Ephemera Eternitatis, by Dr. John Kelman.

The Man with a Handicap. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and honorable—he was also a mighty man in valor; but he was a leper."

Mary Richards, sitting in the back seat, was not thinking of Naaman the Syrian; still less was she thinking of any message to herself. She had slipped in the open door simply to have an hour alone—something that the little crowded house never gave her except late at night. She wanted an hour in which to be miserable over all the hard conditions of her life—the seven years she had spent trying to make a home for father and the children, crowded, tired, discouraged years, with no room for a girl's happy times, much less for the education of which she had once dreamed. And now, just when it seemed as if things ought to be getting easier, with Tom in a good place, and Sadie almost through high school, Tom had become engaged, and Sadie was declaring that she would not go to the normal school—she would rather go into a store. Perhaps it was not strange that Mary Richards was not interested in a Syrian leper who had died nearly three thousand years ago.

Now Naaman was a leper, but— The word rang through the church like a trumpet. Mary Richards, startled, forgot Tom and Sadie for a moment. And in that moment the preacher captured her. He pictured Naaman the first gentleman of Damascus—honored, courted, the favorite of the king, the hero of the people. And then the sudden horror; the mockery of it all in the face of the hideous death creeping relentlessly upon him. Small wonder if heart and courage failed and he sank into a life of bitter idleness. But did he?

Naaman was a leper. He knew it—knew what was certainly before him; *but* he was a great man and honorable, and a captain of the host. No faltering

here—no cowardice of the soul. Death was before him—death in its most loathsome and dreaded form, but the man who had faced his country's foes faced his own with the same undaunted front. He must die, but he would die fighting. He must die, but all the more reason that he should do a man's full work in the time that was left.

Yes, Naaman was a leper, but—up in the little bleak hill-country of Judea was a man said to possess strange powers. It was even rumored that he could restore the dead to life. If Naaman should go to him with gifts—

Now the girl's thoughts were running double. Half-consciously she followed the story of the journey—Naaman's contempt of the directions that came to him, of his consent finally to make trial of the command, of his complete healing. Half-consciously she was thinking of the leprosy, not of flagrant sin, but of doubt, discouragement, discontent. Naaman was a leper but—not a duty did he relax, not a task did he slight for all his awful handicap. And she? What, after all, were her troubles compared with those of hundreds of others all about her? She was young and strong, and she was needed. And was there not One to help?

When the service was over, the girl in the back seat slipped out, her tired young face full of fresh courage.—The Youth's Companion.

There Is always Some "But" about any Situation. There is slag in everything—most everything. There are spots on the sun. The air we breathe and the water we drink bring oftentimes the germs of disease. The joy of winning an honorable success is tinged by the thought of the reduced vitality and the shortened life consequent upon the extra exertion. You can scarcely name a situation where there are not certain offsets to be reckoned against the satisfaction we might otherwise feel.

But note the high measure of honorable success achieved by this man, not because of, but in spite of his handicap. How much of the world's best work has been done by men who were heavily handicapped! Milton was blind, yet in his day no man with eyes was able to see what he saw. No one of them could write "Paradise Lost," or "justify the ways of God to men" as he did. Abraham Lincoln was poor, homely, awkward, and he was only privileged to attend school for twelve months all put together in his whole life, yet he wrote his name above every other name in our American history. Paul the Apostle had "a thorn in the flesh." No one knows the precise nature of it, but it was a serious affliction of some sort. He besought the Lord thrice that it might be removed. It was not removed—it remained. His strength had to be wrought out under conditions which would have spelled weakness for many a man. His great work was accomplished with that thorn in the flesh jagging him at every step. How many men have to face the music played not as they would like to hear it, but with many a jarring discord! Yet they face it and march on, let the tune come as it will.

How much depends upon the placing of the accent when you say a thing or sing it or live it! You can say, if you choose, He had a great many blessings, but he was a leper. You can say, if you choose, He was a leper, nevertheless he achieved all this, the more honor to him!—Condensed from The Story Books of the Early Hebrews, by Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. "Even a child maketh himself known by his doings."

All healing is divine healing.—Motto of St. Luke's Hospital, Cleveland.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. III: Part 2. What Naaman on his Return to Damascus Told the King about Elisha.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the phrase "in such and such a place," verse 8, mean? 2. Who was "the man of God"? 3. What would be our expression instead of "not once nor twice," verse 10? 4. What did the king of Syria mean by his question in verse 11? 5. Along what plain did the Syrians drive to Dothan? 6. What event in Patriarchal History occurred at Dothan? 7. Where is Dothan? 8. Describe the servant's feelings before his vision. 9. Describe Elisha's feelings. 10. What made the difference? 11. Tell the sequel of the story. 12. What did Jacob see at Bethel which assured him of God's presence with him? 13. When Jesus was arrested, what heavenly defence did he say he might have if he would? (Mt. 26.53). 14. How far do the Books of Kings carry the history? 15. Through how many centuries?

ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS

Golden Text

The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, And delivereth them. Psalm 34.7

LESSON 2 Kings 6.8-23 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Daniel 6.1-23; Hebrews 1.14; 11.27

2 KINGS 6.8 Now the king of Syria was warring against Israel; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11 And the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, Nay, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE PLANS OF THE KING OF SYRIA FOILED, verses 8-13. Ben-hadad II, King of Syria, was bent on subjugating Israel. Before attacking Samaria, the capital, he made several preliminary skirmishes which were always thwarted. Each time that he directed his officers to encamp in a certain place, Elisha, *the man of God,* warned the King of Israel (Jehoram) against passing where the Syrians lay in ambush. Each time Jehoram sent a small party to investigate and found that Elisha's warning had been most timely. "Elisha is clearly portrayed as directing a campaign for Israel. All that the passage tells us indeed is that Elisha told the King of Israel where the Syrians were and what roads he should take. That happens, however, to be just about the sum and substance of military strategy. The military advice of Elisha saved the armies of Israel many times. Supernatural as the knowledge of Elisha may have been, it showed itself in a discernment of Syria's plans very distressing to the Syrian leaders. Time and again throughout the Scriptures we find the enforcement of this truth that the inspiration of the Spirit of God puts men into possession of the worthiest practical knowledge (Bishop McConnell). Ben-hadad's suspicions were aroused. He thought there must be a traitor in his own camp who made known his plans to the enemy. He questioned his men, and was told that it was *Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel,* who told his king Ben-hadad's most secretly uttered words. *Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him,* said Ben-hadad, seemingly thinking that Elisha might know his plans against the king, but would not know them against himself!

II. A VISION THAT IS WORTH WHILE, verses 14-17. Learning that

Elisha was at Dothan, the Syrian king, under cover of night, despatched *a great host* with *horses and chariots* to surround Dothan and capture the prophet, for he believed that he could make no progress in his warfare as long as the Israelites were aided by Elisha. At dawn the next morning Elisha's servant discovered the enemy and was panic-stricken. Rushing to Elisha he exclaimed, *Alas, my Master, how shall we do? Fear not,* Elisha calmly answered, *for they that are with us are more than they that are with them.* Recall Hezekiah's words to his people, 2 Ch. 32.7,8; and compare Num. 14.9; Ps. 27.3; 56.3; Rom. 8.31. Elisha's words have become one of the great expressions of religious confidence. Then Elisha besought God to open the young man's eyes that he might see their heavenly defenders. "Man has always the source of infinite power, if he knows God well enough and confidently enough to ask for that power" (E. E. Hale). *And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw* their defense: the hill on which Dothan stood *was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* The vision was a symbol of the reality. The Lord is round about his people, Ps. 125.2. "It were vain in the presence of a great suggestive picture like this to debate the question as to the substantiality or unsubstantiality of those chariots and horses of fire. In the presence of a great picture it may suit some critics to bring their spectacles and their chemical apparatus to test the character of the canvas and the constituent elements of the artist's colors, but to the most of us it would be an act of profanation to deal so with a great work of genius that has its lesson written plain and large across its surface" (Joseph Parker).

A Syrian Chariot

III. THE TRAPPERS TRAPPED, verses 18-23. Elisha prayed that the Syrians might be smitten with blindness, and it came to pass. Bidding them follow him, Elisha led them to Samaria. There their eyes were opened and they found themselves in the power of the Israelites. The King of Israel would have put them to death, but Elisha reminded him that even captives taken in battle would not be accorded such treatment. Elisha's plan was far wiser, even as a political measure. He advised that they be royally feasted and sent back to Damascus unscathed. It would be difficult for the King of Syria to gather another army against so magnanimous an enemy. Elisha's counsel prevailed, and *the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber, verse 12. This shows how great must have been Elisha's reputation in Syria, for no man was ever permitted to enter the king's bedchamber.

They came by night, verse 14. In all parts of the East the sudden raids, which are so characteristic of oriental warfare, generally take place at night and under cover of the darkness.—H. B. Tristram.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When have we heard about chariots of fire and horsemen? What did the one who saw them say about them, and what did he mean?

The Last Years of Elisha's Life. As this is our last lesson about Elisha, let us see what the record says about the remainder of his life. Despite the remarkable relief of Dothan, the Syrians later besieged Samaria and occasioned great distress to its people from famine. Jehoram, the king, did that which was evil; perhaps this was his punishment. When he held Elisha responsible for the state of affairs and sent a messenger to kill him, Elisha foretold immediate relief. And it came to pass. The Syrians, thinking that the Hittites and Egyptians had been hired to attack them, fled in a panic. Four lepers made the amazing discovery of their flight, and reported it to the incredulous king.

Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-hadad, who was sick, sent his servant Hazael to learn whether he would recover. Elisha told Hazael that his master would recover from his disease, but would surely die, and that he, Hazael, would do much evil to Israel. Hazael told Ben-hadad that he would get well, then smothered him with the coverlet of his bed, and made himself king.

While Jehu was in command of the forces besieging Ramoth-Gilead, Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to anoint him king, thus carrying out the commission which Elijah received, 1 K. 19.16.

When Elisha, at an advanced age, lay on his deathbed, Joash was king of Israel. The king wept at the thought of Elisha's departing, saying, as Elisha had of Elijah, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." "Through three long distracting reigns," in the words of Dr. George Adam Smith, "the prophet Elisha, genuine borderman as he was, expert in camp-life, ambush and scouting, inspired with political foresight, was also the moral stay and inspiration of his broken people, in truth the very chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Dothan was twelve miles north of Samaria on the caravan route between Damascus and Egypt. It was on a small hill which could be easily surrounded by the Syrian army. The only other mention of Dothan in the Old Testament is in Gen. 37.17-28; there Joseph's brothers conspired against him and sold him to the Ishmaelites who carried him into Egypt.

Ben-hadad could easily drive with his host of chariots over the open Plain of Esdraelon. "The openness of Samaria is her most prominent feature, and tells most in her history," writes Dr. George Adam Smith. "Few invaders were successfully resisted. One very interesting effect of her openness is the frequency with which the chariot appears in her history. In the annals of Judah chariots are but seldom mentioned. All the long drives of the Old Testament are in Samaria,—the race of Ahab against the storm from Mount Carmel to Jezreel; his long funeral procession in his chariot stained with his life-blood; the drive of Jehu from Ramoth-Gilead; the chariot race between Jehu and poor Ahaziah; Jehu's drive again from Jezreel to Samaria; and the long drive of Naaman from Damascus to the house of Elisha, presumably at Samaria, and the drive back again."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Elisha and this youth sat side by side in the clear morning light, but their visions were different. The youth saw everything that the natural eye could reveal to him. Elisha saw everything he saw, but he saw something else. His spiritual eye was open, and with the eye of his soul he saw God. He lived in the great realm of the Divine presence, and he looked at this young man beside him, and yearned sympathetically to enlighten him. He wanted him to be very sure of God, to look out upon life with open eyes to its spiritual meaning, to have that supreme vision that makes all things different, to set him in a new world. And you Sunday-school teachers, will you remember that your real strength is just here, in the cultivation of the inward reality of your faith, and in the possession of a thought of God that really makes life different for you? If you have this, you will want to open the eyes of the children to see what you see; and if you have a growing vision you will always have something to teach. Elisha wanted to teach this youth to see what he saw; but he did not open the eyes of this young man. He could not. That was beyond the power of Elisha. And it is a task beyond your power. Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes"; and it was God who gave the youth the vision. The best, the vital part of all our work is prayer. Alone we cannot do the work that we would—open the eyes of the children that they may see God in life and life in God. That is our driving task, but it is only to be wrought out with prayer.—W. Charter Piggott.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
FAITH IN THE UNSEEN

Beginning the Lesson. One November day in 1864 President Lincoln was returning from the office of the Secretary of War. As he passed through the long hall of the War and Navy Building he saw a weary soldier in tattered uniform wandering along the corridor and anxiously scanning the doors. "My good man, whom do you wish to see?" questioned Lincoln. The soldier told him that his three-year term of service was over, and he wished to go to his home

in Vermont, but he had no money, only an order from his regimental paymaster for his back pay. He had been wandering for hours vainly trying to find the officer to whom his order was directed. The President did not know where that officer was to be found, but he knew how to help that soldier. He took a blank card and held it against the wall while he wrote this note upon it:

"This poor soldier is in distress because he can get no pay. Will Paymaster General please have him put on the right track to get his pay?

A. LINCOLN."

Lincoln then directed the soldier to the Paymaster General's office and bade him present the card at the door. Of course the soldier promptly received his money.

Can you not see how Lincoln's face beamed with pleasure because he had this opportunity of helping one in distress? His heart was overburdened with anxiety for the nation, yet he was glad to forget his great anxieties for a moment and give aid to an obscure soldier. If we had a fuller record of the prophet Elisha's long life, we should see, I think, that his deeds of kindness to individuals here and there, which the Bible records, were but incidental acts wrought, as were Lincoln's, in the midst of grave cares of state. We have a glimpse in our text today of the share Elisha had in national affairs.

Invisible Spiritual Realities. Mr. H. A. Eager, writing in The Congregationalist, gives an interesting bit of dialogue between two children who were watching the moon rise in all her wonderful splendor. "Sister, I see God right through the moon," said the boy. The practical little sister exclaimed in horror: "Why, you know you can't. That's a wrong story, you know it is." The little brother was shocked, too, for a moment and then he rallied and asked, in a pitying tone, "Sister, can't *you* see anything except with your eyes?" "No, I can't, and you can't either. You know you can't." Here is where the difficulty lies. Some of us can't see anything "except with our eyes."

"Oh! to get rid of the tyranny of the senses; of our implicit assumption that what they reveal to us is all there is!" exclaims one who knows that the other world is the supersensible world about us here and now. "Out beyond us there is a world which we do not perceive. We are familiar with the teachings of science that there are whole worlds of light and sound which we do not touch at all, colors and harmonies to which we are blind and deaf. So the senses are in reality limitations set about our spiritual nature; blank walls which shut in our vision. The spirit is the proper organ of vision for the things of the spirit."

The Source of Courage. The young man whose eyes Elisha opened, believed and took courage. This is the essence of the story.

"The true unveiling of the human eye, the true sight that gives courage to a human heart," writes Phillips Brooks, "is the sight of the Divine Father standing above all our struggling life, looking down into it with love, with pity, and ready to strike down our enemies the moment they grow too strong for us. A soul which comes to the sight of a Father and knows that it is not fighting alone but God watches and works for it above, is as the bewildered soldier looking up out of the dust and smoke and blood, and seeing his captain standing calm and watchful up there where he can survey the whole field and manage the whole battle.

"This is the wonder of the life of Jesus Christ. What made that Humanity so brave and strong? Was it not this, that it was always seeing God? We think it strange that Jesus could stand so bravely before the Pharisees and the Romans and feel no fear. Was it strange if his Father were closer to him than the Romans and Pharisees all the while and hid them from him; if the trumpets and the chariots upon the mountain were so loud in his ears that he could not hear the clatter of the hosts upon the plain? Our Pharisees are so much nearer and clearer to us than our Father! The secret of courage is so simple after all.

"But let us be a little more definite. There is a figurative element in the expression 'seeing God.' Let us see what it is. To see God, I think, may be separated into these three elements. First, it is to recognize his character as the ruling law of the universe. The qualities of God we know. They are involved in our very conception of him. He is righteous, just, loving, true, pure. Now when your eyes are opened, you see these Divine principles running everywhere. God is everywhere. And seeing them you see God.

"And, secondly, seeing God is to see God's purposes in everything. The two are one in essence, but different in apprehension. But when your world opens to you as a plan of God, when all existence is vocal with his meanings, when his intentions thread the universe, so that he who reads human progress, in its largeness or its littleness, reads God's will; that, again, is seeing God.

"And still more to see God is to be conscious of our own spiritual relations to him, to know as a comfort and a motive that he loves us, to be surrounded with his companionship, to find that what we do depends not merely upon what he is but upon his being present with us; in a word, to love our Father with an active love—that is a life for which the devout soul finds no adequate description but that it is 'seeing God.' This, then, is what we mean by 'seeing God.' It is to have the whole world as we think of it, as we live in it, full of his character, his purposes, and his love."

Jehovah, I pray Thee, Open his Eyes that he may See. Last February a man was telling of a visit he had been making to the Grand Cañon of Arizona. As he stood on the verge of the chasm, looking down a mile sheer into the yawning gulch, and then thirteen miles across to the farther wall, he was speechless. His eyes welled up with tears. His flesh began to creep and his hair to move, as though possessed by some great fright.

There were two men by his side. They stood a moment looking down. Presently one of them remarked, "Pretty big hole, Sam." "O, pshaw, come on," the other made answer. "Let's go. I wouldn't give a paper of pins for that." It meant nothing to him. Nothing to him that startling sweep of wonder! Nothing to him those ridges of eternal rock! Nothing to him that dreadful, indescribable void! Nothing, nothing to him!

People say sometimes, "Facts, facts, give us facts." The facts are all about us. Alas! it is not facts we need, but eyes. Eyes to see the grandeur, eyes to see the glory, eyes to see the supernatural, eyes to see God.—Dr. Malcolm McLeod, in A Comfortable Faith.

What Faith in the Unseen God Does for One. Psalm 34.7, our Golden Text, does not mean that if we trust in God we shall be saved from all discomfort or peril. It does mean, however, that our feeling of spiritual security will give us a tranquil mind under all difficulties. It *may* be God's will that his followers are safely kept in times of physical danger. It *is* his will that they are kept in security in times of spiritual perils.

An English writer comments: "We sometimes wonder at the power of evil men; but perhaps it is still more wonderful how often evil is thwarted. The goodness of a man who wholly trusts in the Lord is safer than we sometimes think. It is not so easy as it looks for wickedness to plot successfully against a man of God. If you read the stories of men like George Fox or John Wesley, what will strike you is how often the plots made against them failed. There were so many against them, and they looked so impotent and unprotected, and yet fully trusting in God they seemed to carry charmed lives through many perils. It is true, too, in many missionary stories: these brave workers, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, have been kept safe. 'They forget the woman's God,' said Mary Slessor, facing hostile tribes in West Africa. And more than one nation has been saved, as Israel was, by the presence of some good man whom God has guided to do the right thing."

My God, in Whom I Trust. I waited in awe once, as, looking through a great telescope, I saw Jupiter surrounded by his careering moons. There the mighty planet hung in the far depths of space, with his moons around him. I could see no links of any chain binding his moons to him. There was only a vast emptiness, with planet and moons swinging in it. Instantly my thoughts rushed up and seized hold of God as the sustaining cause. It seemed to me as though I had never before had such a vision of the calm, orderly, unrelaxing power of God. It seemed to me I could feel my little life, with all its tremors and restlessness, in the strong and quiet palm of God.—Dr. Wayland Hoyt.

Why the Germans Failed. General Smuts was the guest of honor at a public dinner. After the meal different men were introduced to him. One of these, an eager student of strategy, thought it an opportunity to learn the General's opinion as to why the Germans lost the battle of the Marne. When he put the question, Smuts replied: "It was God's doing." Some of the bystanders marvelled, unaccustomed to the serious introduction of God's name into after-dinner war talk. Smuts turned to them, and said simply: "There was no mili-

tary reason for the German action; it was a pure blunder. God did not mean Paris to fall."—Sunday School Chronicle.

For Discussion. 1. Mind Reading. Jane sat on the floor back of her mother who stood before a mirror. "Take that thumb out of your mouth, Jane," said her mother. "Can you see everywhere, mother?" asked Jane. That is what the King of Syria and his servants thought about Elisha. The reading of the King's thoughts may have been as easy for Elisha as Jane's miracle. What proof have we that the king was not clever? Verse 13.

2. International morality. The king of Israel would have put the Syrian army to death. Was there international law in those days? Had the Israelites international morals? Consider the relations between law, morals, ethics, religion.

3. Every achievement in the world results from visions. Elisha did not sit down and wait for those chariots of fire to annihilate the enemy. He went ahead and defeated them in the serenity of mind produced by his vision of the unseen. There is a great unseen reality all about us. They that do God's will are given to see it. Our task is twofold: so to live that our eyes are open to visions; to make our visions so real that all may see and profit from them. Ask your acquaintances who have done something worth while about the vision with which they started. Get examples from history, poetry, and fiction.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire Book of Jonah. 2. What does 2 K. 14.25 say about the prophet Jonah? 3. What did Jesus say about Jonah? (Mt. 12.39-41; Lk. 11.29-32). 4. Do you think he believed in the historicity of Jonah? 5. What reasons are there for regarding the Book as an allegory or a parable? 6. When may it have been written? 7. What good and what bad traits had Jonah? 8. What is the great message of the Book of Jonah? 9. What are some of its other lessons? 10. How was Peter led to see that God "is not willing that any should perish"? 11. Is our church doing all it can for foreign missions?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
OUR UNSEEN DEFENDERS

Beginning the Lesson. "Why can't we see God if he is here?" a little girl once asked her father. "What do you think is the reason?" her father asked in return. "I guess it's because we haven't the right kind of eyes," she said thoughtfully, and then added, "We get a different kind of eyes when we die, don't we?"

Must we wait till we die before we see God in the sense that we are aware of his presence? It is not that we haven't the right kind of eyes for this kind of sight, but that we do not make the right use of the eyes we have, if we can not repeat believingly the words of our Golden Text. What are they? Tell me how the truth of this thought was made clear to a young man in Dothan, and then we will see how it can be made clear to us here in ——.

Invisible Power. The moon moves around the earth. The earth with her moon, Jupiter with his four moons, Saturn with his ring, and five other planets move around the sun. The ecliptic, the path of the sun with all the dependent bodies that revolve about it—planets, comets, meteorites, asteroids and satellites—that is, our whole solar system, lies in the middle of that imaginary belt in the heavens which we call the Zodiac. And this solar system of ours is but a small fraction of the multiplicity of systems which we can see in the heavens. What is happening elsewhere in the universe, we don't know. What force holds all of these moving bodies to their courses? Did you ever *see* the force of gravity? Do you believe it exists? Why?

The bomb "went off" and the building was wrecked. What caused the bomb to explode? Chemical action. Did you ever *see* the atoms in the molecule that rearranged themselves? They are too small to see. Do you believe in them? Why?

Bill learned to float in fresh water by practising in a bend of the stream under a willow tree. The drooping twigs of the tree reached the water, and Bill always held on to one of them when he floated. "Why, Bill," said Ben, "that little twig doesn't hold you up!" "I know it doesn't," said Bill, "but I feel as if it did." We are so in the habit of using our outward eyes that we forget the mightiest things are invisible.

How Eyes Are Opened. Ampere was led by a friend to try his eye-

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glasses, when to the latter's surprise the great electrician burst into tears. Ampere had not known before that he was near-sighted, and the sudden realization of what beauty and interest he had missed all his life was most overwhelming. Are we perhaps as ignorant of spiritual near-sightedness?

When we pass from the bright sunlight into a darkened room we can at first see little, but gradually the pupils of our eyes enlarge until what was invisible becomes visible. As with the physical, so may it be with the spiritual sight, the power of spiritual vision will enlarge if we live up to the faith we have.

During the retreat from Mons, we are told, some of the British troops were in peril. They saw a company of angels interposed between them and the German cavalry, and the horses of the Germans stampeded. The Germans tried to force back their horses, but they fled again.

The French told of a mysterious presence whom many men saw—a vision in white, seen and felt in moments of danger, by many men, often at the same time in different places. They called him "The Comrade in White."

Of one thing we may be certain: The soldier who goes to the battle field desiring to resist evil and to uphold good, has about him a Presence, and within him a Power. And that is true of every one of us in the conflicts of our lives.

Will the Presence save our lives here on this earth? And will the Power give us victory? Many on both sides fall, and the victory varies from day to day.

When we pray do we ask that God may be on our side, or that we may be on God's side? It is possible to fight prayerfully on the wrong side if we do not constantly seek wisdom and get understanding.

The Unseen Forces. "Why, yes, it was a good sermon, a scholarly effort, no doubt, but it was misleading," said Ethel Stuart, as she walked homeward with Ruth from church. "I don't doubt that there are many persons who have been saved from danger and trouble by unseen forces, but there are others who have had to fight their own battles. It was a beautiful illustration—that of the servant of the old prophet having his eyes opened to see the host of heaven encamped all about him and his master—a story well told, but the trouble is those are incidents of the past rather than of the present. When one has made her own way, absolutely without influence and friends as I have for the past five years, it makes one a little bit doubtful on hearing a sermon about what we owe to invisible influences."

Neither of the girls thought of the sermon on the unseen forces for a long time. Ethel suddenly found herself compelled to look for another task. The old gentleman, who had employed her for five years, died after a brief illness, and the heirs discontinued the business.

"H-m! Miss Stuart! Employed by Mr. Ackers five years," said the man to whom she applied for work. "I'll take you on trial for four weeks. If you can make good the place is permanent."

This was quite different from old Mr. Ackers' kindly interest, but Ethel did her best. At the end of four weeks, Mr. Lucas told her frankly that she was not competent for the work. "You see, the trouble has been," he explained frankly but kindly, "that old Mr. Ackers overlooked all your errors and corrected them himself. He and your grandfather were the best of friends, as long as your grandfather lived, and he was anxious to help you. He tried to persuade you to take up advanced work and perfect yourself in bookkeeping, but you did not seem to take kindly to the suggestion. You have the making of a good worker, and if you begin at the bottom and work up, you'll succeed in time, but what I need is an efficient worker now."

And as Ethel went from place to place she found out the truth of this assertion. Here she had been priding herself—boasting even—of her rapid advancement, when in truth she owed it all to the friendship of her grandfather and Mr. Ackers! It quite took her breath as she sat down to think it over.

Then suddenly another thought struck her. "I wonder if Mrs. Bayless really wanted me for a boarder, or whether she felt sorry for me when she took me in. I paid fifty cents today for that indifferent luncheon, when I was too far away to walk home, and here I've been boarding at a very cheap rate these five years. I'm going right down to ask her."

"My dear, I'd rather not tell," said Mrs. Bayless when Ethel put the question to her point blank. "I have enjoyed having you and it has been profitable to me to have you for a boarder. That is all I care to say."

Ethel would have the truth, and found out that a distant cousin in another state had regularly paid part of her board all the years she had been an orphan, and had arranged for little comforts and luxuries that the girl could never have had out of her salary.

"Now, remember, you're not to tell," said the old lady, much worried when her boarder took in the facts as to her delightful, homey boarding place, and what it cost to keep up such a place. "Your Cousin Fanny is amply able to care for you, and would be glad to do it, but when you would not live with her, she took this method of safeguarding you. My dear child, you ought to be glad and happy that people are interested in you."

"I am, but it takes my breath," said Ethel honestly. "I never dreamed that anybody was thinking about me, caring for me, or wishing to see me succeed since papa and mamma went. It's simply wonderful!"

It took months for Ethel to correct her careless habits of work and form the habit of study and attention to details. But she won out, even though handicapped with her five years of big pay for inefficient work.

"And now that I am really competent, I'm going to live with Cousin Fanny and help her with her business affairs," said Ethel to Ruth. "She's been wanting me this long time but I waited until I really felt sure of myself. And, Ruth, I want you to know that never again will I doubt the fact that God throws about all his people a wall of protection. If I could trace every bit of help to its source, I don't doubt at all that it would come, not from my ability, but from some help God has sent in my time of need. And whenever I hear people boasting about being self-made I'll remember my own experience.

"I wish everybody could see either by faith or by sight the forces at work to help and guard us, for then, it seems to me, life would be simpler and happier for all."—Condensed from a story by Hilda Richmond.

Fear not, for They that Are with Us are more than They that Are with Them. "Do you see that little finger?" once said the Burgomaster of Hamburg to Mr. Onchen. "As long as I can move that finger I will put down the Baptists." "Yes," said Onchen, "I see your little finger, and I also see a great arm, which you cannot see. As long as the great arm of God is lifted on our behalf, your little finger will have no terror for us."

Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the strength of my life,
Of whom shall I be afraid?

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The true and only conqueror of reasonable fear is reasonable trust.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Open our eyes and make us see
The path that leads to Heaven and thee!—John Hay.

"Some men live near to God, as my right arm
Is near to me; and then they walk about
Mailed in full proof of faith, and bear a charm
That mocks at fear, and bars the door on doubt,
And dares the impossible."

"Would you be troubled, look within; would you be distracted, look around; would you be restful, look above."

There are, who, like the seer of old,
Can see the helpers God has sent,
And how life's rugged mountain-side
Is white with many an angel tent!—Whittier.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. III: Part 3. Elisha the Patriot. Or, The Story which the Syrians Told when They Reached Home.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many books of the Bible are there in the group we call the Minor Prophets? 2. Why are they so called? 3. Name them. 4. Why, as Jesus said, were the men of his time worse than the men of Nineveh? (Mt. 12). 5. Read the entire Book of Jonah and be able to tell the full story. 6. How was Jonah given a second chance? 7. How was Peter given a second chance? 8. What great lesson do you see in the story?

JEHOVAH'S MERCY TO A HEATHEN CITY

Golden Text

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55.7

LESSON Jonah 3.1 to 4.11 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-9

REFERENCE MATERIAL Psalms 117; 145; Isaiah 45.20-25; 49.5-7; Jonah 1.1 to 2.10; Malachi 1.10,11; John 3.16

JONAH 3.1 And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; 8 but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A GREAT COMMISSION, DISOBEDIENCE, AND PUNISHMENT, Chapters I and II. "Whenever we are conscious of an urgent voice which says to us, over and over, 'You ought!' 'You ought!' it is likely that we are listening to the word of the Lord," says a Christian teacher. It was thus that *the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah,* the son of Amittai, telling him that he ought to go to *Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching* that God bade him. Jonah disobeyed the voice. "Jonah says to himself, the first time, 'I ken how it'll be. After I've cried mysel' hoarse that Nineveh's to be destroyed, they'll begin to weep, and the Almighty'll change his mind and no destroy them after a'. It's aye his way gin folk repent. He's of great kindness and slow to anger, but he should keep to his word. He takes no thought upon me, and what a fool like I make o' mysel', crying that folk'll be destroyed when they winna be. It seems as though the Almighty didna ken his ain position to gang back on his word because folk commence to weep. But I'm his servant, and I ken my ain place; I'll no see him place himsel' in a wrong position, and I'll no see him place me in ane neither'" (Sandy Scott's Bible Class).

Instead of obeying the Voice, Jonah went in the opposite direction, the story tells us. At Joppa he found a ship bound for Tarshish (the Phœnician colony on the southwest coast of Spain, then regarded as the very end of the earth), and went aboard. God sent a violent storm; the sailors concluded that some one had offended his god, and they cast lots to discover the culprit. The lot fell upon Jonah, who acknowledged his guilt and advised them to throw him into the sea. Finding the effort to row back to land unavailing, the sailors prayed to Jehovah and then reluctantly cast Jonah overboard. The sea ceased

from its raging and the sailors offered sacrifice to Jehovah. A great fish swallowed Jonah, and after three days cast him out upon dry land.

II. THE SECOND CHANCE, 3.1-3. *The word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time,* for "it is God's custom when he gives a servant a command to a definite duty, and the servant disobeys, and, by the goodness of his God after his fall and repentance is brought back to himself and to readiness to obey, that the old command is invariably repeated" (Stimson). This time Jonah *arose and went* unto Nineveh: he had learned that he must obey, but he had not yet learned that God's plan is always wise and right, 4.1-3.

Gem With the Story of Jonah

II. A GREAT DENUNCIATION, verse 4. *Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, so great that it was a three days' journey* around it. A day's journey may be taken as twenty miles. See the Geographical Background. Entering the city Jonah proclaimed his message, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* "It was a perfectly congenial message for Jonah. Only fear prevented him at first from going with that message with gladness. He contemplated the threatened destruction with pleasure. It was to him perfectly natural that Jehovah should destroy the Ninevites. Jehovah, he assumed, hated them and would desire their destruction" (McFarland).

III. A GREAT REPENTANCE, verses 5-9. The people believed that Jonah spoke the truth, believed that God would destroy Nineveh. The whole population fasted and *put on sackcloth.* See Light from Oriental Life. We are given impressive details about the king's mourning. The change from throne and royal attire to a seat among the ashes and a covering of sackcloth "figures strikingly the mental change from pride to penitence." He issued a decree that beast as well as man should fast and *be covered with sackcloth.* Neglected by their owners, the cattle filled the air with their groanings. Compare Joel 1.20. The Persians are said by Herodotus to have clipped the hair of the horses and baggage animals that they might seem to share in the mourning for a general" (Dummelow). *Let them cry mightily unto God,* the king decreed; *yes, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands.* Nahum (3.1) describes Nineveh as "a bloody city, full of lies and robbery." "Even the Assyrian idolater is represented as realizing the essential requirements of the God of the Hebrews" (Eiselen). Perhaps God *will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not,* the king said, speaking of God in terms that would befit man. "God may relax the bow he has bent without fickleness; regret that he bent it, this he cannot do."

IV. A GREAT DELIVERANCE, verse 10. God saw the repentance of Nineveh, and did not *the evil which he said he would do unto them.* Yet his purpose was fulfilled. "If in the spirit of sympathy a preacher tells a young man he is going to darkness and destruction, and if the word by its tone and truth arrests the attention and quickens the conscience of that young man so that he turns his face towards the light of heaven and the love of Jesus, is not the prophecy fulfilled? Yes, it is fulfilled in the truest, noblest sense, it has entered into the young man's life" (Jordan).

V. A GREAT ANGER, 4.1-5. "I knew that if I came here and preached, God would not do what I told them he would do, and I should be left in the position of a false prophet" (Abbott), thought Jonah in his anger, and he prayed that he might die. "Take away my life," Elijah had prayed, 1 K. 19.4, but for a very different reason from Jonah's: "Elijah was jealous *for* Jehovah, while Jonah was jealous *of* him." *And Jehovah said, doest thou well to be angry?* God had given *him* a second chance, but he was violently angry because God gave the Ninevites also a second chance! "Here was a triumph for Jonah—alone, and with no human help, he had terrified and converted the greatest city in the world. Even egotism, if humanized by benevolence, could have found gratification in this. But poor Jonah was all egotism. A witty Frenchman has defined an egotist as a character who will burn down another man's house to cook himself two eggs. Jonah was quite up to the mark of this definition. He would have burned down a populous and penitent city to enjoy his one egg, the *amour propre* of a seer" (Charles Reade).

VI. A GREAT SATIRE ON SULKY SELFISHNESS IN A NATURE PARABLE OF THE DIVINE CARE, 4.6-11. Under a booth east of Nineveh Jonah sat to *see what would become of the city.* The booth was constructed of branches whose leaves quickly withered, but a *gourd* sprang up whose living leaves sheltered him. The gourd was eaten by a worm, however, and when the sirocco from the deserts of burning sand on the east blew over him, *Jonah fainted* and again wished for death. *Thou hast had regard for the gourd,* a child of the night, Jehovah tells him ("Jonah transfers his pity for himself, as an ill-used prophet, to the gourd which likewise has been hardly treated—a wonderfully true touch of human nature"), *and should not I have regard for Nineveh* with its one hundred and twenty thousand children (*six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left* hand)—*and also much cattle?* "For us Nineveh stands for the whole unchristianized world. For us the gospel is the Book of Jonah translated into the larger terms of God's love. John 3.16 is Jonah 4.11 so expanded as to include the whole world" (McFarland).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Put on sackcloth, 3.5. The mourning dress, sackcloth, was in truth a sack which was thrown over the person and extended down to the knees, but which, nevertheless, had armholes for the admission of the arms. It derives its name from the Arabic verb *to tear asunder,* because in the moment of the person's grief it was torn from the neck down to the breast, and sometimes as far as the girdle. The materials were a coarse, dark cloth of goat's hair.—B. A. John.

Turn from the violence that is in his hands, 3.8. There is an Assyrian inscription on which a king boasts of his capture of the city of Tela thus: "Many captives I burned with fire. Many of their soldiers I took alive; of some I cut off hands and limbs, of others the noses, ears and arms; of many soldiers I put out the eyes. I reared a column of the living and a column of heads. I hung up on high their heads on trees in the vicinity of the city. Their boys and girls I burned up in the flames. I devastated the city, dug it up, in fire burned it. I annihilated it."

It displeased Jonah exceedingly, 4.1. We have not been trained to believe ourselves an elect people; nor have we suffered at the hands of the heathen. Yet, at least, we have contemporaries and fellow-Christians among whom we may find still alive many of the feelings against which the Book of Jonah was written. Take the oriental churches of today. Centuries of oppression have created in them an awful hatred of the infidel, beneath whose power they are hardly suffered to live. That their oppressors share a common humanity with themselves is a sense they have nearly lost. For centuries they have had no spiritual intercourse with them; to try to convert a Mohammedan has been for 1200 years a capital crime. It is not wonderful that Eastern Christians should have long lost power to believe in the conversion of infidels, and to feel that anything is due but their destruction. I once asked a cultured and devout layman of the Greek Church, "Why then did God create so many Mohammedans?" The answer came hot and fast—"To fill up Hell!"—George Adam Smith, in The Minor Prophets.

God prepared a worm, 4.7. On warm days when a small rain falls, black caterpillars are generated in great numbers on this plant, which in one night so suddenly and so often cut off its leaves that only their bare ribs remain; which I have often observed with much wonder, as if it were a copy of that destruction of old at Nineveh.—Pusey, quoted by Eiselen.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Why did Elijah once pray that he might die? What lesson did he then learn?

The Fortunes of the Northern Kingdom from Ahab to Jeroboam II. Between *Ahab,* the king of Israel in the time of the prophet Elijah, and *Jeroboam II,* the king in the time of the prophet Jonah, there were five kings: *Ahaziah,* whose reign was brief; *Jehoram,* his brother, who waged wars with the Moabites and with the Syrians; *Jehu,* the ruthless reformer, who slew

Jehoram and exterminated Ahab's house, and who, according to the Assyrian inscriptions, paid tribute to Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king; *Jehoahaz,* Jehu's son, under whom the Northern Kingdom was reduced to a subject kingdom of Syria; and *Jehoash,* in whose reign Israel partly regained her independence.

The Reign of Jeroboam II. Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, had a long, prosperous reign, 781-740 B. C. Like Solomon, he aspired to make his kingdom a world-power. He won back the province of Gilead on the east, and extended the borders of his empire "from the entrance of Hamath," the gorge between the Lebanons, to "the Sea of the Arabah," to the lower end of the Dead Sea.

During his reign three prophets lived, *Jonah, Amos* and *Hosea.* From the Books of Amos and Hosea we gain information concerning the social and moral condition of Israel. Both prophets declare that the nation will be taken captive by a foreign power, in punishment for its perversion of justice and its oppression of the poor. Jonah seems to have been the friend and counselor of Jeroboam II, 2 K. 14.25. He is the subject, though not the author, of the Book of Jonah. To understand our lesson today the entire Book of Jonah must be studied.

The Book of Jonah. The fact that this book is classed among the Prophetical Books of the Bible, rather than among the Historical, indicates that it has more similarity to prophecy than to history, that its value lies in its ideas rather than in its facts, that it contains something infinitely better than history.

Two views are held in regard to the book. One view is that the writer merely recorded history just as it literally happened. Another view is that the writer sought by means of a didactic narrative, a dramatically told story woven around the life of the prophet Jonah, to teach certain great truths. Dr. George Adam Smith points out that the abrupt close of the story at the very moment at which its moral is obvious is characteristic of all parables, and adds: "So obvious and so natural are the symptoms of the parable, that we really sin against the intention of the author and the purpose of the Spirit who inspired him, when we willfully interpret the book as real history."

The Book of Jonah was written by a prophet who wrote in parable, we believe. Read in the light of its meaning one understands Professor Cornill's enthusiastic words: "This apparently trivial book is one of the deepest and grandest that was ever written, and I should like to say to every one who approaches it, take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

There is no statement in the book as to its authorship or date. "Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city," we read in the third verse of our lesson. Had it been great at the time of the writing of the book, the past tense would not have been used; Nineveh was practically destroyed in 607 B. C., hence we must conclude that the book was not written till after that date; perhaps a much longer time intervened between the life of the prophet Jonah and that of the prophet who wrote the Book of Jonah. The Hebrew is of late origin, and many scholars assign it to the period following the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. At that time Jewish narrowness had grown intense. The little group of exiles made every effort to strengthen themselves in the land against the peoples of many races with whom Canaan had been filled by the Babylonians. They rebuilt the temple, extended its ritual, emphasized the dignity of the priesthood and the severe laws of the Sabbath, enjoined the putting away of the Gentile wives among them, and in every possible manner intensified their exclusiveness.

In such a time as this there came to the writer of the Book of Jonah a marvelous revelation of the fact that Jehovah is God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and of the call of the Jews to make him known to the Gentiles. These truths he taught his countrymen in connection with the story of the prophet Jonah. It is a noble protest against his countrymen's narrow and intolerant attitude toward foreigners.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was on the Tigris River six hundred miles from the Gulf of Persia. Opposite Mosul, the well-known emporium of trade on the right bank of the Upper Tigris, two high, artificial mounds now lift themselves from the otherwise level plain. The more northerly takes the name of Kuyunjik, or "little lamb," after the Turkish village which couches pleasantly

upon its northeastern slope. The other is called in the popular dialect Nebi Yunus, "Prophet Jonah," after a mosque dedicated to him, but the official name is Nineveh. These two mounds are bound to each other on the west by a broad brick wall, with a circumference in all of about nine English miles. The interval, including the mounds, was covered with buildings, whose ruins still enable us to form some idea of what was for centuries the wonder of the world. Upon terraces and superstructions of enormous breadth rose storied palaces, arsenals, barracks, libraries, and temples. A lavish water system spread in all directions from canals, with massive embankments and sluices. Gardens were lifted into mid-air, filled with rich plants and rare and beautiful animals. Alabaster, silver, gold, and precious stones relieved the dullness of brick and flashed sunlight from every frieze and battlement. The surrounding walls were so broad that chariots could roll abreast on them. The gates, and especially the river gates, were very massive.

From Israel to Nineveh

Palace at Nineveh According to Layard's Reconstruction

All this was Nineveh proper, whose glory the Hebrews envied and over whose fall more than one of their prophets exult. But this was not the Nineveh to which our author saw Jonah come. Beyond the walls were great suburbs, and beyond the suburbs other towns, league upon league of dwellings, so closely set upon the plain as to form one vast complex of population, which is known to Scripture as "The Great City." To judge from the ruins which still cover the ground, the circumference must have been about sixty miles, or three days' journey.—Dr. George Adam Smith, in The Minor Prophets.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

In teaching this lesson, turn the thoughts of your pupils away from the unusual elements to the important thing, the message of the Book of Jonah. Read what has just been said about the book.

Let your pupils tell the parables of Jesus which you assigned to them last week from the 13th, 18th, 20th, 21st, 22d or 25th chapters of Matthew, or from the 7th, 10th, 12th to the 16th, and the 18th chapters of Luke. (If you yourself "live from hand to mouth" you cannot do this, for you will not have read this suggestion in time to use it.) Several of these parables, each told in half a minute's time, will prepare your pupils' minds for this Old Testament parable.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

Beginning the Lesson. Who was the prophet Jonah? Where did he live? What did he lead Jeroboam II to undertake? Is he the author or the

subject of the Book of Jonah? Who wrote the Book of Jonah? For what purpose? (Historical Background).

Why Israel Did not See her Duty to the Heathen. The purpose of the Book of Jonah is to illustrate God's grace to the heathen in the face of his people's refusal to fulfil their mission to them. The writer had in view, not a Jewish party, but Israel as a whole in their national reluctance to fulfil their Divine mission to the world. Of them God had already said: "Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I have sent?" (Isa. 42.19-24). The cause of Israel's refusal to carry God's truth to the world was not only their cowardly sloth but their remembrance of the cruel persecutions which they had endured for centuries at the hands of the great heathen nations. It was these which had filled the eyes of Israel too full of fever to see her duty.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

God's Love for the World that Lies in Darkness. The outskirts of Nineveh, the suburbs, were the quarters where the poor dwelt, miles of miserable mud dwellings with a teeming population of "monotonous millions." It was to this outer quarter of the city that Jonah came; he was dealing only with the dull, uninteresting lives of wholly inconspicuous people.

That is today the supreme trial of faith to the missionary. He has to deal, as a rule, not with the intellectual Brahmin, but with the masses of the villagers in India, with the multitudes in the river-side cities of China, with degraded savages in Africa. Foolish friends tell him he is throwing away his life in this work, and illness and weakness and discouragement come to him as to all other mortals; his life will never be a striking one, like Grenfell's, or Livingstone's, or Paton's; it will just be drudgery among the indifferent masses. How constantly he needs to pray that he may be enabled to remember that God loves every soul there, and counts that drab toil as being of infinite value!

Let us bring the matter nearer home. The slums—God loves the dwellers there, the men and women living pathetic, patient, sordid lives. He loves them. Let every mission-worker, every Sunday-school teacher, remember that. Try to make yourself see, and to make your class see, these nameless multitudes with somewhat of God's eye of love.—W. D. Bavin.

The Book of Jonah a Missionary Book. Jonah is the one great missionary book of the Old Testament. This is realized by missionaries today in heathen lands. The Chinese naturally think of the Divine Being as too great to concern himself with ordinary people, and therefore this book with its great lesson about God's love for every creature, however humble, makes an especial appeal to them. In translating the Old Testament into the language of their people it is by no means uncommon for missionaries to translate first the Psalter and perhaps Genesis, and then the Book of Jonah. They do this because they know that Jonah's message comes home to their converts with peculiar power, calling them to a life of service for others, to missionary activity.

The lessons of the universal dominion of God and of the universal brotherhood of men are writ large. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is there a broader conception of the tender mercy of God toward all mankind. When the ignorant sailors, who in their terror at the storm had called on their gods, turned to Jehovah and promised to worship him, they were delivered. When the disobedient prophet prayed to Jehovah, he was delivered. And when the wicked Ninevites cried mightily unto Jehovah, and turned from their evil way, Jehovah delivered them. God's mercy and love extend alike to ignorant sailors, disobedient prophet, and wicked heathen—in a word, to all humanity. Divine pity and tenderness breathes throughout the story, but most of all in those beautiful closing words where they are given to the helpless children and animals in the city of Nineveh. The Book of Jonah tells in story what Faber sings in song:—

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea:
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

You have seen a double rainbow: the one bow bright and clear, the other back of it fainter and dimmer, but a beautiful reflection of the same glorious colorings. The Book of Jonah is the dimmer bow that nevertheless reflects the great truth so clearly seen in the bright bow of the Gospels, where we hear that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.

For Discussion. 1. The Old Testament a Missionary book. See "The Growth of the Missionary Idea in the Old Testament," Biblical World, March and April, 1910; The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Dr. George Adam Smith; God's Missionary Plan for the World, Bishop Bashford; The Bible a Missionary Book, Dr. R. F. Horton; The Missionary Manifesto, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

2. "Jonah was more concerned for personal triumph than for the triumph of grace," writes Dr. Jowett. "His own glory was of more importance than the glory of God. If he had been a modern preacher he would have been more hungry for applause than for converts, and more desirous that converts should join his church rather than become devoted followers of the Lord." Is Dr. Whyte justified in saying that "we are all like Jonah in that our reputation is our first and chief concern in what we do"?

3. Jonah was angry because the gourd had suffered, while, on the other hand, he was angry because the people had been spared. There is the same sentimentalism and lack of proportion abroad today. People will weep over the imaginary sorrows of the heroine of a novel, and yet have no tears for the real tragedies that are being enacted near their own door. The gourd and the people of Nineveh—who would compare them? And yet are there no mothers more concerned about their dogs than their children?—R. Bruce Taylor.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the Book of Amos. 2. What four facts about Amos does the book give us? 3. Give several of Amos's striking statements. 4. Describe the conditions that prevailed in Israel at the time of Amos (2 K. 14). 5. What sins which Amos denounces are prevalent now? 6. Is the world better or worse today in respect to these sins? 7. In a person or in a nation, what is the real cause of any self-indulgence? 8. Do the rich of our day use their wealth better than the rich formerly did? 9. What multimillionaires can you mention of whose use of money you approve? 10. Of whose use of money do you disapprove?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JONAH'S MISSIONARY ADVENTURE

Beginning the Lesson. Raimon Lull was a philosopher and poet of the thirteenth century who felt called to preach to the Moslems in Africa. After spending nine years in mastering the Arabic language, he engaged passage on board a vessel bound for Tunis, but was seized with such terror that he let the vessel sail without him. Then he was overcome with remorse, and, though prostrated by nervous fear, begged to be taken aboard the next vessel. A second time his heart failed him, and remorse tortured him. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," he cried, and his third attempt to sail was successful.

Many centuries before him, a man in the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the name of Jonah was called to preach to the heathen in far distant Nineveh, but he could not bring himself to obey the call, so runs the story in the Book of Jonah. His reason was different from that of Lull's: what was it?

How Jonah Received his Commission. The feelings with which Jonah received the first summons to go to Nineveh are thus portrayed by Edward A. Marshall in Jonah of Gath-Hepher:

"Arise, go to Nineveh." "Nineveh!" Jonah repeated to himself. "Never," he exclaimed, springing to his feet. "That cannot be from God. Israel is his chosen seed. Why seeketh he to warn Assyria? Will he cast away his own and take such brutish idolaters to be his people? My mind hath deceived me." "Arise, go to Nineveh—and cry against it." "Cry against it," he repeated. "That I have always done. I might do that well enough," laughed he, "could I choose my words, but that is not the message. How I wish it were—I'd go and curse them to the end. But I know the purpose of the message and the mind of him who spake it. This room was filled with mercy,—not with judgment. Doth not my prophet's instinct tell me why? God means to be forgiving,—and

so could *I* be, to all but them. Assyria hath been a tyrant and a robber to us and all our neighbor nations. It hath never done one good thing for any people living. Never will I go," he cried as he sprang from the couch and walked the floor again. "From my youth I've hated it with righteous hatred, and loved God's people, Israel, and now—no, this call is not from God; it cannot be; would he preserve a nation that hath been nothing but a curse, and let his own beloved people be their prey?"

Jonah's Missionary Adventure. See The Historical Background and The Text Explained. The effect of the proclamation upon the Ninevites is vividly told by Mr. Edward A. Marshall in these words:—

By nightfall the whole city was in mourning. Weird wailing was heard in every home as if death had entered and claimed its victim suddenly. Shops were closed and business was suspended. The streets became desolate except where groups gathered to discuss the terrible situation. Men repented and paid their longstanding debts; debauchery ceased and some merchants even cast their wine into the streets. Idols were taken from their niches in the homes and dashed to pieces on the pavement or thrown into the river that flowed hard by the city.

In one short day Nineveh had been transformed from a place of evil to a city of repentance and mourning. The rough sackcloth was worn by all, from the least to the greatest, as an evidence of repentance, and with it a universal appeal for mercy went up to the God of the prophet. Even the king covered himself with this coarse garment of humility and sat in ashes.

The wailing and moaning continued all the next day and business was at a standstill. "It is truly genuine," said Jonah, who was familiar with the wail of the professional mourner of his day. "This mourning of Nineveh is from the heart; my words are lost. Every wail seems to be an appeal to Jehovah."

"I Was Ashamed." When Dan Crawford was lecturing in the United States he told about a conversation he had had with an African. "We know that God is angry because he is silent," said the native. "You think God is silent? Listen," returned the missionary, as he turned to Hebrews 1.1 in his pocket Bible, and read: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." When he read, "God . . . hath in these last days spoken," the man stopped him to ask a question. Can you not guess what it was? "'In these last days'?" he said. "Last week, sir?" "Then," said Mr. Crawford, "I began to hedge and trim, sneak that I was. But it had to come, and I was obliged to admit that it was nearly two thousand years since God had sent his Son, and that all that long, long time America and England had allowed the poor despised negro to go without the knowledge that God had been revealed in the world, that England and America had apparently forgotten the command: 'Go ye into all the world.' And I was ashamed."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I maun do as I'm bidden do.—Sandy Scott.

A wrongdoer is often a man that has left something undone, and not always he that has done something.—Marcus Aurelius.

Nothing less than a church whose individual members are tremendously in earnest can evangelize the non-Christian world.—Dr. John R. Mott.

In Christ there is no East or West,
In him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.—John Oxenham.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. IV. Jonah's Missionary Adventure.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Amos? 2. In whose reign did he prophesy? 3. What sins did he denounce? 4. What prophet was Amos more like, Elijah or Elisha? 5. Where was Zion? 6. What did Amos mean by "those that are secure in the mountain of Samaria"? 7. What did he mean by "putting far away the evil day"? 8. What does the fourth verse mean? 9. What one word describes all those whom Amos mentions? (Selfish). 10. Can one who has a small income be as selfish in its use as one who has wealth? 11. Are you as responsible for the way you spend what money you have as you will be when you have more?

AMOS WARNS ISRAEL (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Golden Text

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler;
And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise. Proverbs 20.1

LESSON Amos 6.1-8 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15.1-5

REFERENCE MATERIAL Isaiah 5.11,12,22,23; 28.1-13; Hosea 4.11; Amos 2.6-8; 5.10-15; 8.4-7; Galatians 5.19-21

AMOS 6.1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come! 2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border? 3 —ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; 4 that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; 5 that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David; 6 that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive; and the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away. 8 The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by himself, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts: I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE HEATHEN'S CRIMES AND ISRAEL'S—A SATIRE ON THE LUXURY OF THE RICH AND THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO THE PEOPLE'S SUFFFERING, verses 1-6. It is the aristocrats whom Amos is addressing, the men of wealth and influence. Their sense of security was not unnatural. The nation was at peace, their own resources were abundant, their God was manifestly favorable, and they were resolved to retain that favor by their elaborate and costly worship, and by their enthusiasm for religion as they understood it. But more than that: the capital cities both of Israel and Judah were deemed, not without historical justification, to be well-nigh impregnable. In point of fact, thirty years after this prophecy of Amos, Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, kept the besieging Assyrian army at bay for three years, before she finally met the doom which Amos here pronounces. And a century and a half afterwards it took the Babylonians eighteen months to effect the capture of Jerusalem. Splendidly situated, both those cities were defended by the surrounding mountains; and both imagined themselves to be further secured, beyond the possibility of menace, by the good-will and the protecting power of their God. As the mountains were round about Samaria and Jerusalem, so, they believed, would Jehovah be round about his people. Hence their confidence, which Amos derides, in the mountain of Samaria. Let the worst come to the worst, they had God and the mountains, and that would surely be enough. To this airy confidence, Amos retorts with his crushing *Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria.*

As so often happens, with this confidence went conceit. The people styled themselves the foremost nation—a word worth nothing, as Amos comes back upon it twice again in the course of his address. Accustomed as we have been by history and experience to empires on a mighty scale, there may seem something rather ridiculous in this self-designation of Israel, a country at most a hundred and fifty miles in length and a good deal less in breadth. But it has to be remembered that, with the exception of Assyria and Egypt, the peoples bordering upon Israel, and with whom she was most familiar, were small like herself; and, apart from this, as we are told in the Book of Kings, and reminded

in the last verse of this chapter of Amos, during the reign of the enterprising Jeroboam the Second, the territory of Israel had been restored to its ancient limits, and the glories of the old Davidic empire had been in a measure revived; for the king "restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath in the far north to the sea of the Arabah, that is, the Dead Sea, in the south" (2 K. 14.25). So, if Israel held her head high, it was not without reason.

But Amos punctures their pride by a few historical illustrations. Turning their attention to one or two towns in northern Syria, and then to the Philistine Gath, he asks scornfully, "Are you better than these kingdoms? or are your borders greater than theirs?" Great and strong as they were, they had fallen; and what was Israel, that she should be able to offer an effective resistance? Was she greater or stronger than they were? There was somthing as ludicrous to the clear-eyed Amos as to us in Israel's claim to be the premier nation, especially when such an ambitious people as Assyria was beginning to stir, which possessed both the power and the will to lay all the little western nations in the dust.

So we are to picture these leaders of the national life as men whose heads were swollen with a ridiculous sense of their nation's place in the world, men unable to measure the political forces or estimate the political probabilities of the day, and foolishly confident of their own impregnability, whatever might betide; bringing on—like the fools they were—by their wanton and supercilious conduct, *the evil day* which they imagined they had *put far away* from them. But that general picture is more sharply defined. In one of the most graphic passages in the Old Testament Amos takes us into one of these aristocratic mansions, and lets us see something of the life led by these prominent and fashionable leaders. Their furniture is of the costliest. The couches upon which they loll—how the simple shepherd would despise the very sight of them!—are inlaid with ivory brought from distant lands. They are not only indolent and profligate, they are extravagant gluttons; *they eat the lambs out of the flock.* Here perhaps we can detect a note of sorrow as well as of anger; it is a shepherd who is speaking, vexed to think that his little lambs should be destined to come upon the tables of the sort of men he denounces. They *eat the calves out of the midst of the stalls.* They are topers as well. Not content with cups, they *drink wine* out of huge *bowls.* But the æsthetic side of life was not forgotten. Their banquets, at which wine flowed so freely and the dainties were so toothsome, were enlivened by music, vocal and instrumental: *idle songs* were sung to a strumming accompaniment. These revellers, too, believed in good perfumery: *they anointed themselves with oils* of the very choicest kinds—"the first of the oils"—a scornful allusion to the nation's description of itself as the first of the nations. The "premier" oil for the leaders of the "premier" nation—how fitting! But the most damning charge of all Amos reserves to the last: *they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph,* or more literally, "they are not sick for the wound of Joseph." The people, called here by the name of their great ancestor Joseph, are broken—the whole book of Amos makes that plain enough—broken morally and spiritually, broken largely by the sort of men whose manner of life he has just been describing, and soon to be broken even physically and politically by the deadly onslaught of the Assyrians; but these indolent, dissolute political leaders care nothing about it. The test of a true statesman is that he is grieved, sick, when the people are broken—as, for example, by social injustice. But the leaders and statesmen of those days did not care.

Assyrian Drinking Scene

II. ISRAEL'S DOOM, verses 7 and 8. *Therefore,* says Amos: those who have breathed the atmosphere of Amos learn to tremble when he utters his

"therefore," for they know that something terrible is coming. *Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive.* Here again there is a bitter, ironical allusion to their conceited designation of Israel as the foremost nation, and to their effeminate indulgence in the choicest perfumes. So be it, says the prophet, in his grim way: foremost in empire, foremost in foppery, foremost therefore in destruction. Then, when they are marched off in dismal procession to the miseries of exile, "the riot of the revellers shall depart," says Amos in the alliterative way of Hebrew prophecy; and, when the land has been swept clear of them, the silence would fall like music on the prophet's indignant heart.

Such a civilization as Amos has just so vividly described could only end in one way; and he represents Jehovah as solemnly swearing by himself—he can swear by none greater—that he *will deliver up the* wicked *city* (Amos is thinking, no doubt, chiefly of the capital), *and all that is therein,* to the ravages of the invader. The mention of so solemn an oath always shows that the soul of the prophet is very deeply moved.

We could infer without difficulty from all that has gone before, and especially from his picture of the gluttonous, drunken, luxurious, noisy nobles, the reasons for that doom; but he happens to express them here in a terse and telling phrase, which is highly significant for his outlook upon society. *I abhor the excellency of Jacob*—that is, the proud temper of the people, and the things in which they showed it, ostentatious wealth, luxury, houses—*and I hate his palaces.* Thus saith Jehovah, and thus saith also his prophet. He hates the palaces, with their gorgeous furnishings and their pampered inhabitants. But this must be very carefully noted—otherwise the gravest injustice is done to Amos, and his message is misrepresented—that his hatred of the palaces and his scorn of the nobles are deeper than the mere disgust of a simple peasant at the luxurious refinement of the city. The pomp of the great city houses is detestable, not only because it has cost too dear: it has cost the happiness of the poor and the character of the rich. They have been built upon cruelty, extortion, injustice (3.10)—that is why Amos hates them, and that is the key to his message: passion for justice burns within his soul and hurls him against the serried ranks of wealth and lust. Hate the evil and love the good; let justice roll on like a river.

And let it never be forgotten, in reading Amos, that his gloomy threats were fulfilled. There is both Biblical and Assyrian evidence for that.

NOTE. This fine interpretation of our lesson is taken from A Cry for Justice, by Dr. John Edgar McFadyen.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What prophets have we studied in this Quarter's lesson? How would you characterize each?

The Prophet Amos. "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son: but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore-trees; and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel," Amos 7.14,15. Amos was not a member of a prophetic guild, but he was chosen by Jehovah to be his messenger to Israel—he was an "inspired farmer." He could no more help prophesying, he tells us, than one can help fearing when the lion roars: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear; Jehovah God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" Amos was a Judean. In the desolate, sandy uplands south of Tekoa he had pastured his flocks. He was a desert man. In the desert where a man is alone with his God and has time to meditate and form clear judgments, Amos, like Moses and Elijah and John the Baptist, learned leadership. He had meditated long and earnestly upon Israel's sins and probable fate, when God "took him": there flashed upon him the conviction that he must be God's messenger to his people Israel, that through him the Divine warning must be spoken.

Amos was the champion of "the simple life." He lived simply himself, and he had no use for those who lived in idle luxury. He was intense in his beliefs and feelings. Throughout his address we see his hatred of all evidences of luxury or grandeur, his regard for the lowly and needy, his sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed. Forcibly does his address show forth the influence of his life among the wilds of Southern Judea. To him life was serious, nature was stern, God was severe. "To him the thunder and lightning, wind, storm and tempest, which he so often witnessed in all their fierceness and awe-inspiring grandeur on those lonely hills, were but manifestations of God's anger with

his sinning people, an anger which was demanded because God was just. And the teaching of Amos dealt mainly with the wrath of God."

Amos was a fearless servant of God. Like David, in the care of his flock he had braved ferocious beasts—the lion and the bear—and he could face brutal men without quailing. Opposition and enmity were his portion. Trouble for him culminated at one of the great festivals of Bethel, when he accused the Israelites of having sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes, of having turned aside the way of the meek and laid themselves down by every altar upon clothes taken in pledge. Therefore, despite their seeming prosperity, disaster would overtake them. Amaziah, the supercilious priest of Bethel, tried to silence him. Amaziah sent a message to the king accusing Amos of treason and endeavored to frighten Amos away, but Amos fearlessly finished his warning, and evidently on his return to Judah wrote down the substance of his addresses. Tradition—which may or may not be true—says that he was cruelly beaten and died in a short time after being carried back to Judea.

The Date of the Book of Amos. Amos lived in the eighth century B. C., in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. "Two years before the earthquake" he himself dates the beginning of his prophecy. Uzziah reigned forty-five years in Jerusalem (782-737 B. C.), and somewhere in that reign occurred an earthquake so startling and devastating that the Judeans dated events from it, just as they so often dated them from the deliverance from Egypt. It was probably in the middle of the eighth century B. C., perhaps 755 B. C., that Amos wrote his book, the first of all the prophetical books, hence he is called "the father of written prophecy." The Book of Amos is, moreover, the oldest book in the Bible; for while parts of the Historical Books were written earlier, taking the books of the Bible as they stand, this is the oldest of them all.

The Message of Amos. To all outward seeming Israel was at peace and exceedingly prosperous in the time of Amos. Jeroboam II, the greatest of the kings of the northern kingdom, had a long and brilliant reign. Before his time Israel had lost much territory in wars with the Syrians, but the Syrians were now vanquished by the Assyrians, and Israel rapidly regained lost ground, for Jeroboam II was most successful in his military exploits. Israel was even at the height of its prosperity, feared by its enemies and respected by its allies, its foreign trade greatly expanded and its domestic commerce flourishing, and everywhere there were evidences of superabundant wealth. Men and women were "at ease in Zion"; clothed in "purple and fine linen," they reclined in ivory chairs by day and rested on ivory couches by night. But Amos was not deceived by all this display. He noted the concomitant evils, indolence and corruption and injustice, feastings and revelings and intemperance, and the belief that God would overlook all things, that because they were his chosen people God must protect them from their enemies, that if they but observed an elaborate ritual worship they could sin as they pleased, and all would be well. "Not far beneath this shining surface," writes Dr. McFadyen, "the clear eyes of Amos saw the symptoms of decay; and the words of his first recorded message are that Jehovah, the God of this easy-going people, would roar from his temple in Jerusalem, like a lion just before he makes his spring. The implication is that Jehovah will soon spring upon his people, to tear them to pieces; and Amos's message we might describe as the Gospel of the Lion's Roar."

Four great facts stand out in his message to Israel: (1) the iniquity of Israel; (2) the righteousness and wrath of Jehovah; (3) the certainty of judgment; (4) the Assyrians will be God's agents in meting out the punishment.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The prophet Amos was a native of *Tekoa*, in the mountainous region six miles south of Bethlehem. His addresses were delivered to the people of the Northern Kingdom, and especially at *Bethel*. See page 34.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Try giving your pupils problems such as the following:—

1. If you were to inherit tomorrow a fortune of fifty millions, what would you need to learn? At six percent what would be your income per year, per month, per day? How many families would your income support, using the

average income of an American family? Using the minimum of bare living as estimated by the Department of Labor? Using the minimum income making possible decent American standards, from the same source?

Bearing in mind a desire (1) to do the least harm, (2) to do the most good, (3) to interfere as little as possible with the laws and customs of the community, lay out a scheme for administering your income. Do the same for getting rid of your whole fortune.

Read Brewster's Millions. The World Almanac, the Statesman's Year Book, the Census reports, as well as the publications of the Bureau of Labor can be used in such research work as this.

2. If you began "doing things" for poor people, how would you expect them to feel and act? Why? What is *noblesse oblige?* Give instances of its working. Is there any justification for graded rates of the income tax?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
SOCIAL EVILS YET TO BE CONQUERED

Beginning the Lesson. There is a story to the effect that one day the artist Whistler was standing bare-headed in a store where gentlemen's furnishings were sold. Mistaking him for a clerk, a man rushed up to him and said indignantly, "I bought this hat here yesterday. It doesn't fit." Whistler drew back and looked him over coolly. Then he said: "Your coat doesn't fit, either. Your trousers are too large, and your shoes are not the right size." Then he turned away, leaving the proprietor of the store to deal in the best way he could with the irate customer.

There is criticism and criticism. There are critics and critics. The criticism which is meant to hurt is not likely to help. When a man criticises because he takes pleasure in wounding he may bring blood, but he ought to remember that bleeding is not so frequently prescribed as it was in other days. The only man who has a right to be a critic is the man who feels hurt himself with every stroke of the sword he wields.

Amos was one of the most powerful destructive critics whom the world has known, but it was always evil and poisonous things which he aimed to destroy, and his own heart was torn with the tragedy of the life which he so remorselessly condemned. He used simple and unmistakable words. He removed the covering and revealed all the sores which disfigured the body of the nation. He had an awful passion for facts. Not one ugly, coiling evil escaped him. He brought a complacent and comfortable people into the presence of their sins. It was not easy for Amos. His soul was drawn with the horror of it all, but it was the one thing the people needed supremely. Their critic was their best friend.

"The Lord Jehovah hath spoken: who can but prophesy?" cries Amos. He does not feel that his words are his own. He does not feel that they are simply the expression of a lofty standard applied to the people's life. He feels that they are the words of Almighty God, spoken through his lips. God himself is the critic who is finding fault with a perverse and evil-minded people.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough, in The Christian Advocate.

The Social Evils Amos Denounced. See Text Explained.

Not Grieved for the Affliction of Joseph. The rich of Israel were indifferent to it; they had neither heart for the poverty nor conscience for the sin of their people. We know their kind! They are always with us, who live well and imagine they are proportionally clever and refined. They have their political zeal, will rally to an election when the interests of their class or their trade are in danger. They have a robust and exuberant patriotism, talk grandly of commerce, empire, and the national destiny; but for the real woes and sores of the people, the poverty, the overwork, the drunkenness, the dissoluteness, which more affect a man's life than anything else, they have no pity and no care.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

Social Evils in Great Britain. It is always easier to see and condemn the barbarities committed by others than to perceive the oppressions and wrongs that prevail in our own midst. A writer in Great Britain arraigns his own countrymen as follows: "Our forefathers were able to see the barbarities of the slave traffic, but it took a long time to see the barbarity of allowing children of ten years of age to work fourteen and fifteen hours a day in factories. We

were all able to see the ruthlessness of the German methods of colonization in the Cameroons and German East Africa. But what about our own ruthless behavior in India, to say nothing of Africa and our insistence of the opium traffic in China? We all agree that it is unwise to sell intoxicating liquor to the natives of Africa or Ceylon, but what about the ruination of the young life of our own country?"

An Appeal to the Young People of America. Nations, like men, lose themselves in the swamps of covetousness, selfish luxury and idle sport, and then we call them decadent. The early record of all nations is heroic because it is by heroism that they became nations. It was conspicuously so with this nation. A great people was fashioned out of hardship, made lovers of liberty by resistance to injustice, and the Republic they established was the creation of moral energy. Is America to become decadent? Is she to follow the course of so many nations of antiquity, which after brief domination and triumph sank into obscurity? She will do so, if she rejects the law of God in the heart and goes after the strange gods of covetousness and luxury. She will do so, if she loses her spiritual idealism and shall care less and less for the things of God and more and more for the things of Mammon. She will do so, if she breeds a people who care more for pleasure than for God and duty. And what can save her? Only her youth can save her, the generation now coming to its heritage, for with them lies the making of the future. And so I would say to the youth of America, to you are confided the destinies of America. From the dim historic past the Pilgrim Fathers watch you with eager hope, Washington and Jefferson salute you, and the martyr spirit of Lincoln invokes you to fulfil the purposes for which he died, and see to it that government of the people, government by the people and government for the people does not perish from the earth. These men were great because they hid the law of God in their hearts, because they knew what the fear of God and the love of right meant, because they brought to the business of life the spirit of a noble idealism and a self-sacrificing patriotism; and you can only fulfil the intentions of their dedicated lives by receiving a double portion of their spirit.—From a Sermon by Dr. J. W. Dawson.

How Has This Ideal Been Reached in America? This is our ideal—a land where you meet no drunkard staggering on the road towards his doom; a land where you have no slums for humanity to rot in; a land where you have two thirds of its prison cells empty; a land with its workhouses vanished; a land with its children well fed, well clothed, well sheltered, well trained, with their merry laughter ringing through the streets; a land where the curse of drink shall be driven from all hearths.—David Lloyd George.

Why We Must Have Prohibitory Laws. There is an element in the population which must be protected from its own folly. We protect children by giving the parents legal authority over them. It is necessary to protect the adult children of the race from self-destruction. In so doing some of the liberties of the strong may be affected. Every law is a curtailment of some one's liberty. America freed from every form of drug addiction is about to develop in wealth, intelligence and world leadership in a way that will justify to all succeeding history the passing of prohibitory legislation.—The Christian Century.

Dangerous Softness. In the centers of learning I notice a growing luxury and extravagance even among those who are by no means rich, a tendency in the direction of love of ease, a growing "softness," a coming under the spell of the materialistic influence of our day. These are dangerous signs, and I see a providence in a movement which causes the students to gaze steadily upon the need of their brothers in the home and foreign fields. In our universities we need enterprises vast enough to appeal to the imagination, difficult and baffling enough to call out the best energies of minds and hearts, tragic enough to jar and shake the academic, the theorising, the dreaming tendency of many students into reality—a need and an enterprise engrossing enough to enable students to lose sight of themselves, an enterprise overwhelming enough to drive them to the discovery of God and of his irresistible resources.—Dr. John R. Mott.

For Discussion. 1. Amos, the Prophet of Justice. See Chapter VI of Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Dr. Robert W. Rogers.

2. The Book of Amos. See A Cry for Justice, by Dr. John Edgar McFadyen; The Book of the Twelve Prophets, by Dr. George Adam Smith.

3. What is temperance? For about half a century we have had temperance workers and societies whose aim has been to put a stop to drunkenness and indeed to all drinking of liquor for pleasure. Other societies have fought the social evil, and the use of tobacco to excess and by the young. Now we have a "temperance lesson" which does not dwell upon any of these topics. Why?

4. The agencies in your community for inducing the rich and powerful to be temperate in their use of money and power: how successful are they? The agencies for the defence of the weak and poor from aggressions: how do they work?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In brief, what is the history of Israel from Jeroboam II to its downfall? 2. How many of the kings were assassinated? 3. In the end, what two great nations were trying to get control of Israel? 4. Who was the ruler of Assyria at this time? 5. How long was Samaria besieged? 6. In what year was the Northern Kingdom destroyed? 7. What became of the people? 8. What were the causes of the nation's fall? 9. What prophets had warned the nation of its danger? 10. What dangers threaten our nation today? 11. What does Isa. 60.12 say about the punishment of nations that disobey God? 12. What is the "framework" of the record of each king in the Book of Kings?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE EVILS OF SELF-INDULGENCE

Beginning the Lesson. "I came into the House of Commons one morning," said Sir Philip Warrick, a contemporary of Cromwell, "and perceived a gentleman speaking I knew not. He was clad in a plain cloth suit which seemed to have been made by a very ill country tailor. His linen was plain and not very clean, and his hat was without a hatband. His countenance was swollen and reddish. His voice was sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervor."

These words give us a very good picture of Cromwell, that stern Puritan, and in some ways it is a good portrait of a stern prophet of the eighth century B. C., Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa. There were those who said that Amos was rude and uncouth, but his words are certainly full of fervor.

The Shepherd Becomes the Prophet. Amos was a shepherd and therefore was a man of the country, and in all his utterances there is the breeziness of the hills and the freshness of the mountains. Just as our farmers go to the markets from time to time, and attend annual fairs, the shepherds of Judah and Israel used to go to the market-places of their land to conduct their business, to buy and to sell. It would be an interesting journey for Amos to go to Jerusalem, which was twelve miles away, and to Bethel, ten miles farther. He would meet men from other lands. Men from Egypt who were come to buy the homespun for which the housewives of Israel were famed. Hard faced men from Phœnicia who were willing to purchase slaves. Philistines who were always on the look-out for things to barter, besides countless hangers-on in the market and in the street. Many interesting stories would be told. There would be scandal and gossip as well as songs and revelry. When the shepherd got back to his quiet home amongst the hills he pondered the things he had seen and heard. He thought of Bethel and Gilgal and Beersheba, with their temples and their fairs. He thought of the roguery of the market and the sanctimoniousness of the temple. He saw that religion had degenerated into a mere form, and that religious worship had lost its force and power. The whole tone of worship was artificial, and not genuine. The people were concerned with trifling matters of form and were neglecting the weightier matters of faith. Their social customs, too, were far from being what they ought to be. There was no justice in the land. The poor were crushed with a cruel and merciless oppression. All these things burned into his soul, and there came to him the conviction that he must go forth and declare what God had given him to see.—J. W. Harford.

Amos's Warning. See The Text Explained.

The Evil of Indulgence in Alcoholic Drinks. An amount of alcohol which one man might seem to consume with impunity may be seriously injurious to another; and a daily consumption which will not produce the slightest symptoms of intoxication, or even of discomfort, or headache, may be slowly and fatally damaging the cells of your liver or kidneys. The conviction is growing

among pathologists that the tissues of many moderate drinkers are damaged in this slow, insidious way, without their being in the slightest degree conscious of any injury or even discomfort. You can never quite tell what alcohol has done to you until the post-mortem—and then the question won't interest you much.—Dr. Woods Hutchinson.

The Evil that Another Enemy Can Work. I am a far too common sight in the neighborhood of every high school.

I am small and innocent in appearance, but I contain immense possibilities for working mischief.

I ruin many a foot ball team. No coach will permit players to use me during the season, for I am sure death to wind, speed and "pep."

I am responsible for innumerable failures in school, and for still more in after life.

I can destroy a boy's ambition and will-power, and put his brain to sleep.

At my best, I am a worthless thing to spend good money for. At my worst I injure body, mind, and morals.

The evil I do is incalculable. Still I flourish.

I am the students' worst enemy.

I am the cigarette.—John Elson, in The Congregationalist.

Hate the Evil, Love the Good. A great materialist writes on orchids: "What sensitive things these are! They like to run amongst the mosses, or in the cracks of the bark of living trees, but will turn away from a dead branch, or try to secure a fresh hold if one on which they live is diseased. The point seems almost conscious, turning here and there as if feeling for a congenial anchorage. They show their distaste in an unmistakable manner, by throwing out new aerial roots, feeling their way to something better." This is the sort of sensitiveness we need—quickness to detect the scent of evil, promptness in rejecting diseased things, and eagerness to fasten again on the sound and pure. Let no thought of advantage prevail to turn us aside to the right or left; do not think that any divergence is slight and of small consequence.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

The Essential Lesson. I doubt if there is any lesson more essential to teach in an industrial democracy like ours than the lesson that any failure to train the average citizen to a belief in the things of the spirit no less than the things of the body must in the long run entail misfortune, shortcoming, possible disaster upon the nation itself.

Our children must be trained in the elementary branches of righteousness; they must be trained so that it shall come naturally to them to abhor that which is evil, or we never can see our democracy take the place which it must and shall take among the nations of the earth.—Theodore Roosevelt.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Hate the evil, and love the good.—Amos.

Those are commonly careless of the troubles of others who are set upon their own pleasures.—Matthew Henry.

Show me what pleases you, and I will tell you what you are.—Spanish Proverb.

Shutting the eyes to the danger signal does not clear the track.—B. F. Cope.

We may shake our fist at the growing thunder cloud, but it will not disappear.—E. Johnson.

The blind and cowardly spirit of evil is forever telling you that evil things are pardonable, and you shall not die for them, and that good things are impossible, and you need not live for them; and if you believe these things, you will find some day, to your cost, that they are untrue.—Ruskin.

Note-Book Work. V. Amos Warns Israel.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What information do the first six verses of our chapter give us? 2. To what country were the Israelites transported? 3. What were the causes that led to the captivity? 4. What does "they hardened their neck," verse 14, mean? 5. What commandment did God give forbidding the worship of idols? 6. What king first led the Israelites (the people of the Northern Kingdom) to worship idols? 7. What other kings sanctioned or furthered idolatry? 8. What prophet fought against idolatry? 9. With what success? 10. How did Amos warn the people? 11. How do you take reproof? 12. Do you ever say, "I don't care"? 13. What is the "framework" of the record of each king in the Book of Kings?

THE DOWNFALL OF ISRAEL

Golden Text

Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14.34

LESSON 2 Kings 17.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 1
REFERENCE MATERIAL Hosea 7; Amos 2.6-16

2 KINGS 17.9 And the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God: and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the wachmen to the fortified city; 10 and they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree; 11 and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger; 12 and they served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. 13 Yet Jehovah testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14 Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah their God. 15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and *went* after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom Jehovah had charged them that they should not do like them. 16 And they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17 And thy caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. 18 Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ISRAEL CONQUERED BY ASSYRIA, verses 1-6. We have reached the last stage in the history of the Northern Kingdom. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, invaded the land and exacted tribute of Hoshea, the king of Israel. After a few years Hoshea failed to send the tribute required, and Shalmaneser learned that he was secretly trying to form an alliance with So, king of Egypt, Assyria's enemy. The Assyrian king imprisoned Hoshea: "as for Samaria," wrote the prophet Hosea, "her king is cut off, as foam upon the water," Hosea 10.7. What could little Israel hope to accomplish against great Assyria? Yet Israel offered a stubborn resistance to the Assyrian forces, and it required a three years' siege to conquer her. Sargon II (723-705 B. C.) had meanwhile come to the throne of Assyria, and he transported the conquered Israelites to Halah, and on the Habor, and in the cities of the Medes. According to Sargon's inscription, twenty-seven thousand two hundred and ten were carried away captive: many more must have been left in the land (2 Ch. 34.9), who intermarried with the Assyrians sent to take the place of those deported, and from them descended the Samaritans about whom we hear in the Gospels.

II. THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE CAPTIVITY, verses 7-17. Dr. Maclaren calls these verses "a *post mortem* inquiry into the diseases that killed a kingdom." Notice that the overwhelming might of the Assyrian army is not regarded as a real cause: the writer is giving the moral and spiritual meaning of the history. *It was so because the children of Israel had sinned against Jehovah their God.* The first great fault was ingratitude. Israel owed its very existence to Jehovah who had *brought them up out of the land of Egypt*

SARGON II, CAPTOR OF SAMARIA

From Sargon's Palace at Khorsabad

The king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria.—2 Kings 17. 6.

from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, but the ransomed people, instead of proving loyal to Jehovah, *feared other gods* and followed the laws of the heathen nations about them. *They did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God,* trying to serve both him and false gods. They *built them high places,* for idolatrous practices, *in all their cities,* from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city: these words show how widely scattered were the idolatrous places, for the towers were for the lonely watchmen who guarded their flocks afar off. *And they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree.* The *pillars* were columns of stone erected beside altars as symbols of the God worshipped there, relics of the old stone worship: *the Asherim* were columns of wood, or sacred trees, symbols of the goddess Asherah, a survival of the ancient tree worship. *And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as* earlier *did* the Canaanites, *the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them,* as told in the Book of Judges. *And they wrought wicked things,* immorality was rampant, *to provoke Jehovah to anger. And they served idols,* although *Jehovah had said unto them, ye shall not do this thing,* Ex. 20.5; Dt. 12.31.

Dr. Maclaren points out that there are two records of sin in these verses which are not merely repetitions. The first series of sins (verses 7-12) meets one kind of response from God; the second series of sins (verses 14-20) meets a different kind of response. The first response is the sending of the prophets (verse 13). The second response is the destruction of the kingdom (verses 20-23). Jehovah had warned Israel *by every prophet and every seer* (he that is now called a prophet was before times called a seer, 1 Samuel 9.9). As we have seen in our recent lessons, the prophets and seers who had warned Israel were Ahijah, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Jonah, Obed, Amos and Hosea. Those who had warned Judah were Shemaiah, Iddo, Micaiah, Hanani, Jehu, Zechariah, Micah, and Isaiah. *Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck,* "like some perverse ox in the yoke, stiffening his neck and standing the very picture of brute obstinacy" (Maclaren), *like to the neck of their fathers:* see Ex. 32.9; 33.3; Isa. 28.1-4.

They followed vanity, and became vain. By *vanity* idols are meant: "following a nothing they became good-for-nothing—would in some measure give the play on the word" (Wood). They imitated *the nations that were round about them, and made them molten images, even two calves* (recall our first lesson), *worshipped all the host of heaven,* the stars, *and served Baal.* They even practised the cruelest rites of the heathen, kindled a fire in the hollow interior of the God Moloch and when the arms were red hot, threw children into them. They *used divinations and enchantments, and,* in short, they *sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger.* The measure of their iniquity was full.

III. THE CURTAIN FALLS, verse 18. "The wages of sin are always paid: if there is any delay in settlement, compound interest is added." *Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel* because of her sins, *and removed them out of his sight.* Palestine is here thought of as especially the land of Jehovah's presence. *There was none left but the tribe of Judah only.* The tribes of Benjamin, Simeon and Dan had been merged with that of Judah, and constituted the Southern Kingdom. *So Israel was carried out of their own land to Assyria unto this day,* verse 23. Thus the Northern Kingdom became "the lost Ten Tribes," blotted out from the pages of history.

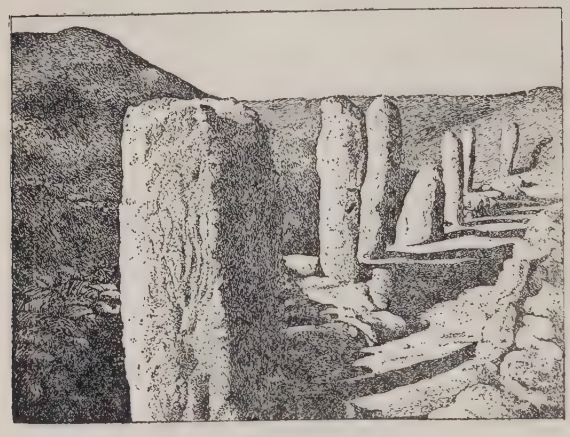
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The king of Assyria took Samaria, verse 6. This king, Sargon II, called "Sargon the Later" to distinguish him from the illustrious Sargon I, who lived about 3800 B. C. He founded a magnificent city at Dur-Sargon, the modern Khorsabad, near the site of old Nineveh. His palace, which covered twenty-five acres and was fortified by walls and towers, was one of the most gorgeous of the East. In the ruins of his palace, uncovered in 1843 by the French consul Emile Botta, large numbers of inscriptions and bas-reliefs illustrative of his reign have been discovered. One inscription is as follows: "Samerina (Samaria) I besieged, I captured. 27,290 people dwelling in it, I carried away. 50 chariots I collected from them and the rest (of the people) I allowed to retain their possessions. My commander-in-chief I placed over them, and the tribute

of the former king I placed upon them." In another parallel text these words are added: "I settled there the men of countries conquered by my hand"; see verse 24 of our chapter.

They built themselves high places, verse 9. All ancient peoples have worshipped upon the heights, for there they seemingly felt themselves nearest to the Deity who dwelt, as they believed, above the earth. Sacrifices were their means of communing with Deity, and therefore altars were erected.

"These ancient deities are not yet wholly dead," Dr. R. A. S. Macalister tells us in his History of Civilization in Palestine. "They survive in the cult of local shrines. There is not a landscape in Palestine which is not dominated by one of the white-domed hill-top sanctuaries, now dedicated to the memory of some true-believing Moslem who acquired sanctity in one way or another, but notwithstanding still carrying on, under a thin disguise, the tradition of the primitive hill-top shrines. The high places have not even yet been taken away, and the oath by the sheikh is far more binding locally than an oath by the Supreme Being. Within sight of Gezer is the shrine of the Sheikh Selma. Accuse a man of theft, and he will swear by Allah to his innocence in the most emphatic way. Conduct him to Sheikh Selma and ask him to place his hand on the tomb and then to take an oath of innocence, and it will not be difficult to discover the truth from his behavior under such an ordeal."



The High Place at Gezer

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What king first caused Israel to sin, and what was his offence? What other kings followed in his ways? What prophets warned the nation to turn from their sins?

How Israel Came under the Dominion of Assyria. The last great king of Israel was Jeroboam II. At his death Israel entered on the last stage of its history: king after king ascended the throne, misruled for a brief period and was assassinated: moral and religious chaos reigned within, such as the prophets Amos and Hosea describe; and dangers continually threatened from without, for Assyria was bent on conquering the kingdom, and Egypt was looking on with jealous gaze.

Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II, after a few months' reign was slain by Shallum, and Shallum after only a month on the throne was slain by Menahem. Menahem gave tribute of a thousand talents of silver to Tiglath-pileser III, which he exacted from the rich men in his kingdom, for that king's protection. (Tiglath-pileser was a Babylonian prince formerly known as Pulu or Pul, 2 K. 15.19, who had usurped the throne of Assyria.)

Menahem's son Pekahiah was slain after a brief reign and his throne seized by Pekah, one of his officers. Pekah so feared the power of Assyria, that he formed a confederacy with Rezin, the king of Syria, that nation which had been Israel's bitter foe for more than a century, and the two tried to force Ahaz, king of Judah, to join them against Assyria. Ahaz refused, Pekah and Rezin invaded his territory and carried many captives back to Samaria, whose release the prophet Obed secured. Ahaz paid no heed to Isaiah's warnings and appealed to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria for aid. The latter attacked Israel and Syria. In 734 B. C. he conquered northern Israel as far south as the plain of Esdraelon

and took thousands away captive, and in 732 Damascus "fell before him." A large clay tablet found in the ruins of the palace at Nimrud, and now in the British Museum, contains the official records of his reign. It begins thus: "Palace of Tukulti-Apil-Esharra, the Great King, the powerful king, the king of the world, the king of Assyria, the King of Babylon, the king of the land of Shinar and Accad, the king of the Four Quarters; the mighty, the brave, who by help of Asshun his Lord brake in pieces like a potter's vessel the whole of them that obeyed him not, like a flood overwhelmed them, and gave them over to the wind."

Tiglath-pileser claims to have slain Pekah and to have appointed Hoshea in his stead and to have exacted from him a tribute of a thousand talents of silver and ten talents of gold. The Bible narrative says that Hoshea slew Pekah: doubtless Hoshea owed his position to Assyria.

In 728 B. C., Tiglath-pileser died and the throne of Assyria passed to Shalmaneser IV (727-723). Shalmaneser invaded Israel and exacted tribute of Hoshea—here our lesson begins.

Samaria was taken in 722 B. C. The Northern Kingdom had lasted 215 years after the division of Solomon's kingdom in 937 B. C. During this time there were nine dynasties and nineteen kings, while in Judah there was but one dynasty, save for Athaliah's reign, and there were only twelve kings.

Why Judah Lasted longer than Israel. Judah remained an independent kingdom for nearly 133 years longer, when in 588 B. C. it was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. That Israel's downfall preceded that of Judah was really due to the very causes which gave it its greater importance, Professor Wade explains. "Its superiority to the Southern Kingdom was the consequence of its advantage in respect not only of extent and fertility, but of trading facilities, inasmuch as it was traversed by the principal commercial routes leading from Egypt to Phœnicia and the Euphrates. But its wealth and productiveness excited cupidity, whilst its situation upon the great arteries of traffic which swelled its prosperity, rendered it accessible to invasion, as is shown by the repeated sieges sustained by its capital, Samaria. Judah, on the other hand, though smaller and weaker, was much less vulnerable. It lay off the main line of march pursued by the armies of the greater Eastern powers; and when penetrated, offered little to repay the cost of acquisition. Judah's isolation and comparative poverty were thus sources of strength and enabled it to outlast by nearly a hundred and fifty years its more favored rival."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Assyria was originally a small district lying south and west of the Mountains of Kurdistan, Armenia, east of the Tigris River and north of the Upper Zab. The limits of the kingdom were extended till it included all Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and parts of Asia Minor and Egypt.

The location of Halah is not known, but it is believed to have been in Northern Mesopotamia. The Habor is the river now known as the Khabour, a tributary of the Euphrates. Gozan was a part of Mesopotamia. The cities of the Medes were south of the Caspian Sea.

Countries of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Each week you are assigning to your pupils questions about the books of the Bible which we are studying, I trust. They are included among the "Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson," and are all answered for you in the treatment of these books in our Introduction pages 20 to 27. If your pupils are not able to find out the answers for themselves, you

will need to take a little time from the discussion of the lesson to dictate the information which they are to learn during the week. In small classes you can save this time by copying the information for them in advance. It would be most helpful to teachers of Bible classes if the members had their own copies of this Guide. Do not fail to call for the answers to the questions assigned nor to review them until you are satisfied that this knowledge has been made your pupils' permanent possession.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
HOW NATIONAL SINS ARE PUNISHED

Beginning the Lesson. See The Historical Background and The Text Explained.

"And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him for their watchman; if, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and

Jewish Captives

taketh not warning, if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood must be upon him."

These words of the prophet Ezekiel uttered later to Judah, express the truth concerning Israel. They had been warned times without number; "Jehovah testified unto Israel by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways. Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the necks of their fathers."

It is said that when Alexander the Great once laid siege to a city he had a great lantern set up and kept burning day and night as a signal to the besieged. He notified them that as long as the lamp burned they had time to save themselves by surrender, but when once the light was extinguished, the city and all that were in it would be given over to destruction without mercy. Throughout these lessons we have seen such a lamp burning, as it were, for the people of Israel. At any time they might have surrendered wholly to their great King and all would have been well. Now we have reached the climax of the story, the light is extinguished, the time for mercy is past.

The Result of Disobedience to God. The terrible upshot of all was "to provoke the Lord to anger." The New Testament is as emphatic as the Old in asserting that there is a capacity of anger in God whose name is love, and that sin calls it forth. As in the first sin, so in all others, God has said, "Ye shall not do this thing," and we say, "Do it we will." What can the end of that be but the anger of the Lord? "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

To be swept out of his sight is the fate of obstinate rejection of his commandments and pleadings. Israel made itself the slave of evil and was made the captive of Assyria. Self-willed freedom, which does as it likes, and heeds not God, ends in bondage, and is itself bondage. God's anger against sin speaks pleadingly to us all, saying, "Do not this abominable thing that I hate." Well for us if we hearken to his voice when his anger is kindled but a little. If we do not yield to him and cast away our idols we shall become vain as they.

These captives, dragging their weary limbs, with despair in their hearts, across the desert to a land of bondage, were but shadows, in the visible region of things, of the far more doleful and dreary fate that sooner or later must fall on those who will none of God's counsel, and despise all his reproof, but cling to their idol till they and it are destroyed together.—Alexander Maclaren, in The Second Book of Kings.

How Some National Sins Have Been Punished. Ages ago Egypt was the cradle of the Arts, the mother of learning. She had her chariots of iron, her cities with their hundred gates. She reared her pyramids to stand for ages, monuments of her power and of her tyranny. She built her massive prisons and forged instruments of torture to girdle the limbs of men. She brought home her captives and overawed her enemies by mere terror of her name; but nothing could she do to elevate her moral life and save her people from decay. Her teeming millions, though victors in war, were themselves vanquished by a stronger power. The God of Nations had been disregarded; his principles set at naught; and his punishment must follow.

Greece followed, so refined, so cultivated, so polished, that the homes of her people were not unworthy of the gods they worshipped; her sculptors and philosophers were their fit companions. If ever culture or refinement could perpetuate a nation and preserve it from decay, then Greece had never fallen. But at the very time when her orators and philosophers were crowning themselves with a wreath of immortal honor, her people had sunk into such sensual and degrading practices as would pollute the lips that name them. At the very time when the ruined temples were standing in their proud magnificence, the cry of her seers was rising to the gods who could not help them. "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned!"

Rome followed with her foot of iron with which she crushed the nations. Her soldiers crossed the Alps and Pyrenees and changed the destinies of Europe. They carried the sword into Africa until the sands of the Sahara alone debarred their way. They disturbed the peace of the East, and anon, planted their standard in Britain, claiming for themselves a universal Empire. Rome did much for the world. She civilised the countries she crushed; she constructed roads upon her blood-stained track; she flung bridges across rivers she forded; she made laws; beneficent for herself—a rich legacy for us. But she could not heal the wound which was shortening her days. The highest precept she could give to her deluded people was simply this: "Live every day as if the eye of Cato were upon you." What a piteous antidote for the ravening disease of moral misery! It needed no seer to foretell the fate of such a nation.

And side by side with these great nations—Egypt, Greece, and Rome—the Hebrew people were writing their history in the words of blood. Abraham pitched his tent in Mesopotamia at the time when Egypt was in the glory of her youth. Titus stormed the city of Jerusalem and humbled her pride when Rome had reached her highest pinnacle of power. In that great interval the history of Israel was like an oft-repeated tale—coming to God—wandering away again. Prostrating themselves before Jehovah with tears and supplication, in sackcloth and ashes, and anon debasing themselves with incestuous idolatry and rebellious sedition. One year they were sitting peaceable and quiet at their judge's feet, another year found them crying for deliverance from the trouble into which their sin had brought them. Chastened by Philistines and Edomites; enemies without; weakened by sedition within; they were at last subjugated by a mightier power and scattered to every corner of the earth, where they weary heaven with repeated lamentation.

And now we turn to our nation and ask what will be the record of her fate. Is it to be ever thus? Is every nation to decay and fall after living a few short centuries? Is every citizen to believe that his country's banner will one day be trailing in the dust? Is every man to be haunted by the consciousness that he is not what he might have been? Is every stranger to prowl among the ruins of his former greatness and exclaim: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned!"

Why has it ever been thus? Is it not because the God of Nations has been disregarded? Because men have been blind enough to beat the music out in tune with their own ideas? Because they have deified the Ego and dethroned the Almighty? Priding themselves upon their achievements they have mounted their walls and cried with that Eastern arrogant king, "Is not this great Babylon

which I have built?" Nations have decayed, not for lack of power, but for lack of piety. Failure has swooped upon us because we would not give to God the glory of success. Even when their walls were tottering many a people would have preserved their name had they the humility to acknowledge to the Supreme Sovereign: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned."

Thus we hear a note of hope ringing through this wail of woe. To a proud people it is a cry of despair. To a pious people it is a pæan of victory. We stand among the ruins of the past and see how short we have fallen of the glory of God. Failure besets us on every hand. Past achievements are marred with imperfections. Present duties are blighted by our incompetence. Future prospects are clouded by shadows from the past. We lift our heart to heaven and cry with all humility; "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned!" But the winds of heaven which waft our prayer to God bear back to us the message of hope: "Fear not for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name. Thou art Mine."—Condensed from a Sermon by J. Frederic Sanders.

Are We a Christian People? We had a tremendous mental shock at the beginning of the War; we had to ask ourselves what had become of the world. Could the world in which such things as the invasion of Belgium were happening be a Christian world? Nothing worse happened in the pagan world than much of what was done by the German Government in Europe at that time, culminating in the massacre by the Turks of a million Christians, a massacre of non-combatants, men, women and children, which the German Government could have stopped had it wished.

We have to face another fact—a great many neutral countries did not condemn the German Government's action. There were neutral countries in which the bulk of the educated classes and of the clergy sympathized with Germany and expressed no disapproval of the crimes of the German Government. How came it that men otherwise good and upright were not more shocked at these crimes? Where was their Christianity? They had not the excuse which was pleaded for the subjects of the German Government, that they had been kept in ignorance by the suppression of news.

One feels that all peoples have a sort of collective responsibility for the atrophy of Christian principles to which these facts point. We are driven to suppose that the moral fiber of the world had degenerated, and Christian character and thought had everywhere fallen below the Christian standard.

What can we do to make our country a Christian country? The more we feel what has been called "the bankruptcy of civilization," the more we feel that the only thing that can save the world is to return to the precepts of the Gospel, and try to bring our practice nearer to our professions.

There is no light from any quarter promising moral dignity and purity and goodwill among men except that which comes from the Gospel. That is the Light which lighteth every man, and that is the Light which we must do our best to spread, not only abroad but among ourselves. The precepts of the Gospel are the one remedy for all the troubles we see around us at home and abroad. No nation has ever yet really tried to put those precepts into practice.

There seems to be a great call going out to us now to Christianize other peoples. To do this effectively, we must begin by Christianizing ourselves. If the Gospel is the only Light, then it is according to the Gospel that we must try to rule our own lives and induce others to do so. The best way to move others is to set an example by following these precepts ourselves.—Viscount Bryce, in an Address.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. A corrupt nation deserves extinction. Well may the nations that have been greatly blessed and richly endowed tremble if they are unfaithful! The same God rules still. He will not be flouted for ever. The day of doom is not for ever delayed. Of that truth the vanished Northern Kingdom is one of the plainest proofs.—R. C. Gillie.

2. Disobedience must not be condoned by those in authority. "Do you like to have your mother scold?" one small boy asked another. "Oh, I don't mind," he answered. "She doesn't mean a single thing she says." A committee of pupils called on the school principal. "We want to know if you will not let Jack play in the next game," said they. "We know he hasn't made the required marks in his lessons, but we can't win without him." "Boys," said the princi-

pal, "I want to say Yes, but I can't, because it isn't right." There was a long pause. "Do you know," said the chairman of the committee, "I believe you!"

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
RESULTS OF DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD

Beginning the Lesson. At what age did the baby you know best learn that anything let go of drops and does not return, no matter how hard one cries? That is the first step in the lesson: *an object dropped does not return.* But when the baby's mother heard the cry, she said, "Poor baby!" and picked up the dropped rattle. That is the second step: mother interferes with this terrible force that pulls my things away from me: *when I cry, she brings them back.* Then when the baby began deliberately to throw things down, mother shook her head and said, "No, no!" And the next time at the baby's cry, she said: "Mother said, 'No, no!'" *And she did not pick up the rattle.* So the baby learned that when you flout the law of gravity, you get punished; that crying does you no good; that mother feels for you and will intervene in your behalf; that she, however, has her limits of graciousness; that when she forbids a thing, she, too, like the Force that pulls things down, does not change. Her "No, no!" however, is a warning. In that she is much kinder than the silent Force. But once you fail to heed her warning, she not only does not pick up your rattle, but looks at you and speaks to you with disapproval.

A mother who says "No, no!" and then picks up the toy turns the baby's whole inner world into chaos. In the future he thinks: "Sometimes she does and sometimes she doesn't. I'll take a risk." And in ways like this the world is filled with disobedient children.

The Israelites were like children. A wise child learns that his mother knows best; that she warns in kindness; that to act against her warning always brings trouble; that when the trouble comes she is sorry—she wipes away the tears and even lessens the trouble. But her yea is yea and her nay is nay.

The Israelites were children. Did they need the tenderness that a child needs? Did they know better? How did God show himself tenderer than a loving mother when Jonah was his spokesman? Read Psalm 103.13 and 14. Had God warned these Israelites? Who had uttered his warning?

Results of Disobedience to God's Laws. God's whole universe moves according to laws. These laws are like that Force of Gravity that cannot safely be broken. He who tries to break them gets hurt—and what is more, causes others to get hurt. There must have been many children innocent of guilt in those thousands who were taken into captivity.

God does two things for us, however. He warns us through the voices of his prophets, men of God who cry out against our sins. And he pities us and even sometimes intervenes to help us when the broken law punishes us. What does the last verse of Jonah say?

From your own experience tell of some physical laws that you have broken, what warnings you had beforehand (were you grateful for them?), how your suffering came, and what consolations you received. Through whom came the warnings and the comfort?

Think of the moral laws you have broken and follow those lessons out in the same way. Remember that at any point in your waywardness, if you repent and turn about, while you may not be able to prevent the bad consequences of your conduct, you can, by prayer, transform the consequences to your own soul. That is what the Christian believes about communion with God.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Have a heart that never hardens.—Dickens.

Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?—Job.

"Consequences have no pity."

Sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death.—James.

Who spurns the shrine of Right, nor wealth nor power
Shall be to him a tower.—From the Greek.

That nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.—Isaiah.

Note-Book Work. VI. The Downfall of Israel.

REVIEW

Golden Text

Jehovah is righteous in all his ways,
And gracious in all his works. Psalm 145.17

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 130

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
TEACHINGS OF THE QUARTER

Religion, Patriotism, Ambition. Religion involves devotion to the Unseen Reality who is the origin, the end, the cause and the purpose, the inspiration and the aspiration, of the soul. We see in that Unseen Reality personal attributes without personal limitations, and with mingled love and awe we speak the name—God.

Loyalty to Religion means the subordination of lesser loyalties. It would seem clear that Patriotism and Ambition could live in our hearts only as they could be subserved under the mandates of Religion. Was not the Spanish Inquisition perfectly logical—granted its premise that the Church Authorities voiced the commands of God—when it declared the denunciation of the members of one's own family, or of one's closest friends, the truest proof of devotion?

Yet confusion is common in differentiating Religion and Patriotism. Diplomacy, ancient and modern, has been built on the implication that God is subordinate to country, and that brotherhood ceases at the frontier. Find the places in this Quarter's lessons in which these ideas are corrected through the prophets.

What is a nation? Shall we base the definition on geographic, ethnic, lingual unity, or upon a unity of ideas?

The Ulsterites and the Sinn Feiners occupy one little island. What is to hold them together? Are the Jews disliked by many people because they hold together, or do they hold together because they are disliked by many people?

Is the United States a nation disloyalty to which is worthy a severe jail sentence because the thirteen colonies united against George III, or because we inherit the ideas on which Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton and Franklin compromised?

What has inspired the leadership of nations—the desire to serve or the desire for fame? Pure patriotism, or ambition?

"Yes, I recommended him for the place," says a school man to his wife, "although he is not the one best suited to it, for he can get me the two votes I need to become superintendent. And when I am superintendent, I will do such great things for the schools!"

One and the same leader may be: 1. desirous of serving his country; 2. desirous of using his abilities; 3. desirous of achieving a high position. Generally all three motives move him.

In the light of these thoughts—and of the additions you have made to them—discuss 1. the righteousness of the revolt of the people against Rehoboam. 2. Jeroboam's part in the revolt.

Compare the results of success in Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Show that they were afflicted by the same disease in different stages.

It is a disease to which rulers are peculiarly liable. Are prophets? Can you find any symptoms in any of the prophets about whom we studied this Quarter?

Elijah probably glowed with satisfaction as he ran before Ahab. And then came the reaction. The four hundred and fifty were dead, but Jezebel still lived. This is where Elijah's egotism was severely rebuked. God is a good teacher. He did just what the best modern pedagogy would recommend. He let Elijah fall only so far, and then lifted him up, set him on his feet, gave him a chance to get a sense of proportion and to see his own work as a part of a whole. And then he set him another task.

When Elijah was about to leave his task only partly done in the hands of Elisha, we wonder how he felt as he tested Elisha's persistence. Perhaps he, too, questioned, "How much of this is zeal for God and how much is personal ambition?"

It is much easier to see the relative authority and value of Religion and Patriotism, and to see the true wisdom of putting loyalty to Religion before worldly ambition, in the Scripture records than in contemporary history: why?

Reformers. Elijah uttered violent and denunciatory invocations against the sins of the king and the people. He called down a drought on the people and then didn't stay to share it. He challenged the priests of Baal to the trial by fire, and he mocked them when they failed. He had no compunctions about putting the four hundred and fifty priests to death. He was so full of a consciousness of his own zeal that he took no account of the possibility that the Lord had other witnesses ready to testify to their faith.

There are modern political and economic reformers who have shown the same sort of zeal. John Brown undertook to overthrow the institution of slavery "by force and violence," and forfeited his life. But those who ultimately did overthrow it went into battle with his name on their lips. The militant suffragists, both in England and America, shocked the sensibilities even of those who served the same cause in more moderate fashion. But no one can deny that their disturbances kept the subject in the focus of attention.

How do you account for the fact that Ahab, though he dubbed Elijah "mine enemy," nevertheless called the people together at Elijah's behest, and permitted the killing of the false prophets? Had they any constitutional rights,—freedom of speech and of publication in those days? Or was it fear of public opinion if he shirked the test, or was it the sheer weakness of a self-doubter before one assured of his righteous cause?

Elijah claimed to be speaking in obedience to God when he threw down the challenge to the priests of Baal. The Japanese Buddhist who visited Tibet, Ekai Kamaguchi, when in doubt as to a policy, threw himself into a self-hypnotised trance, awoke with what college boys call a "hunch," and followed it as a spiritual guidance. The analytic psychologist would attribute it to a "suppressed desire"—to the appearance of a real self. In what case would you regard such an impulse today as the voice of God?

Compare Elijah's "I have done all these things at thy word," with the former German Kaiser's "Gott mit uns."

"I don't read the opposition magazines," says one; "I can't bear their Elijah-like utterances." "Constructive criticism is so much better than destructive criticism," says another. "Why should we feed our souls on negatives?" "For my part," says a third, "I believe in evolution, not revolution. Let us imitate the quiet and orderly developments of Nature. There is no need of cataclysm."

But evolution is not an inclined plane, spirally rising, except as viewed from a great distance. To those who form part of the process it is full of breaks—of precipices and chasms, of tumbles and leaps. The processes of Nature, however generally upward, are marked by the dramatic, cataclysmic methods of geology—long periods of sedimentation, big slips, causing faults and earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions devastating at first, but affording fertile fields later. Human development follows the same apparently irregular upward course. "The seam of civilization is backstitched." This is God's way.

While some violent denunciations of present social wrongs may seem unjust, the fact that they are uttered should be welcomed as a symptom of something to be cured. In so far as they are true, they are God-inspired. And the answer to them should be, not the suppression of the eruption, but a scientific treatment of its cause.

If we were to pray God to raise up for us an Elijah, an Elisha, a Jonah, or an Amos to help the nation or the world today, for which should we ask? Have we anyone to turn to now? How is He represented? Is He well represented? What is a chief business of the church in these matters that Jonah and Amos treated? What is your duty therein?

A Review by Means of Allusions. Let all who recognize each allusion signify this after its reading. Call for statements.

It was B. L. T. who succeeded to the mantle of Eugene Field, and he wore it worthily.—N. Y. Tribune.

Imagination is given to us that we may be able to vision forth the ministry of our God beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that girt us round.—Ruskin.

Up, Christians, leave your caves and do!—Dr. Meyer.

For from Israel is even this; the workmen made it, and it is no god; yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.—Hosea.

This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,
For they have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.—Longfellow.

Pour forth the oil, pour boldly forth,
It will not fail until
Thou failest vessels to provide
Which it may freely fill.

Dig channels for the streams of love
Where they may boldly run;
And love has overflowing streams
To fill them every one.—R. C. Trench.

Here in the brush it is delightful again and again to watch how God hears you scraping the bottom of the meal barrel.—Dan Crawford.

Why, my soul, sittest thou by the brook Cherith
When the wine of life is nigh at hand?—Thomas Champness.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was king of Israel when Asa ascended the throne of Judah? (1 K. 15.9). 2. How long did Asa reign? (1 K. 15.10). 3. For what was Asa indebted to his father? 4. What use did he make of the time of peace? 5. What did David say to Solomon in 1 Ch. 28.9 about serving and seeking God? 6. Compare the two accounts of Asa's reforms (1 K. 15.9-24; 2 Ch. 14.1-15).

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE CHARACTERS OF ELIJAH, ELISHA, JONAH AND AMOS

Class Work. At the top of a sheet of paper write the name *Elijah*, and in three columns beneath it write nouns, adjectives, and verbs which the name Elijah brings to your mind—thus:—

ELIJAH

Nouns	*Adjectives*	*Verbs*
Zeal	Wrathful	Ran
Discouragement	Eager	Warned, etc.

Justify each word by the facts that caused you to choose it. Explain why some of the words in these columns contradict others. Is that human? Would you expect it of a prophet?

Make similar lists under the names of the other three prophets of our lessons for this Quarter—Elisha, Jonah, Amos. Do you find contradictions in these three lists? See if you can prove that each of the four prophets acted in a very human manner.

Make a similar list of yourself under your own name, basing your use of adjectives, verbs, and nouns on facts that you have observed about yourself.

What danger is there in making a similar list for some friend or acquaintance? Would every such list involve contradictions?

Now take your four lists for the four prophets and cross out all words that indicate occasional traits, leaving only the terms that show dominant traits, or character. Look over your own list, and decide which you mean to cross out in future, and which to write brightly on Life's page.

Compare the cowardice of Elijah and of Jonah. Compare their fits of despondency. Whom does Amos most resemble? Why?

Which of these prophets do we see in personal relations? Which as public characters chiefly? Explain. Whose work, as told in our lessons, is really a thread on which a national history is hung? Whose work, as here told, is really a parable? Whose mission is told by a succession of anecdotes?

What traits of God are shown in the stories of these prophets?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was the Kingdom of Judah? 2. What was its capital? 3. Who was its first king? 4. What may we call Rehoboam's "epitaph"? (2 Ch. 12.14). 5. What may we call Asa's? (2 Ch. 15.17). 6. For what good deeds is Asa remembered? 7. What were Asherim? 8. The high places? 9. What is there in your life which needs reforming? 10. Who will help you?

TREE WORSHIPPERS IN INDIA TODAY

SECOND QUARTER

PROPHETS AND KINGS IN JUDAH (SOUTHERN KINGDOM)

LESSON I—APRIL 2

ASA RELIES ON GOD

Golden Text

Help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee. 2 Chronicles 14.11

LESSON 2 Chronicles 14.1-12 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 145.1-10

REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Chronicles 14.13-16; Isaiah 41.10-13

2 CHRONICLES 14.1 So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. 2 And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God: 3 for he took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and brake down the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, 4 and commanded Judah to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5 Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the sun-images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. 6 And he built fortified cities in Judah; for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Jehovah had given him rest. 7 For he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, the land is yet before us, because we have sought Jehovah our God; we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered. 8 And Asa had an army that bare bucklers and spears, out of Judah three

hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and four-score thousand: all these were mighty men of valor.
9 And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and he came unto Mareshah. 10 Then Asa went out to meet him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 And Asa cried unto Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude. O Jehovah, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. 12 So Jehovah smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ASA'S LOYALTY TO JEHOVAH, verses 1-5. This Quarter we follow the course of events in the Southern Kingdom. Recall our first lesson of the year about the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam. When Abijah, Rehoboam's successor in the Southern Kingdom, the Kingdom of Judah, died, *Asa his son reigned in his stead* and reaped the results of his father's warfares (see the Historical Background), for *the land was quiet ten years. Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God.* Fired with religious zeal against idolatry, *he took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and brake down the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim:* recall our lesson two weeks ago. From *all the cities of Judah* he removed the *high places and the sun-images.* "The Hebrew word for sun-images is *hammanim,* 'sun-pillars,' which were used in connection with Phœnician Baal-worship; this worship had been imported into Palestine."

In the next chapter of Second Chronicles we are told that Asa, in obedience to prophetic admonition, took away the idolatrous pillars, but did not remove the high places. We are also told in the same sentence that "nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days." "Such contradictions afford evidence of the good faith of the chronicler," says The Expositor's Bible. "His contradictions are clearly due to his use of independent and discrepant sources, and not to any tampering with the statements of his authorities. They are also an indication that the chronicler attaches much more importance to spiritual edification than to historical details."

Asa's religious reforms extended to the people: he *commanded Judah to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers,* not the gods of the heathen, *and to do the law and the commandment.*

II. ASA'S DEFENCES AND ARMY, verses 6-8. Asa's zeal was also expended in great military defences, fortresses with towers and gates and bars, so as to strengthen the frontiers of his kingdom. *The land is yet before us,* he said to his people, that is, it was free from enemies, *because we have sought Jehovah our God. So they built and prospered.* Asa also raised a great army: there were *three hundred thousand out* of Judah that bare bucklers and spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand *out of Benjamin that bare shields and drew bows,* all of them *mighty men of valor.*

III. ASA'S VICTORY OVER ZERAH, verses 9-12. Knowledge of Asa's great army reached *Zerah the Ethiopian* and he *came out* to overthrow this new military power "Zerah, if an Ethiopian or Egyptian, is probably to be identified with Osorkon II, an Egyptian king of the twenty-second dynasty, who, on a monument recently found, declares that 'the upper and lower Rutennu' (the peoples of Palestine) had been thrown under his feet. But in verse 14 the cities spoiled by Asa after the defeat of the invaders are said to be near Gerar; so Zerah may have been the chief of an Arabian tribe, a view with which the description of the spoil taken by Asa, verse 15, agrees" (Dummelow).

In spite of the size of Asa's army, it was outnumbered by that of Zerah's almost two to one. Asa *went out to meet* Zerah, and when they had *set the battle in array,* he besought God to come to his assistance. *There is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength,* to help the weak against his more powerful foe, he cried. *Help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude. O Jehovah, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.* "We do not say, Lord, take our part, for we have a good army for thee to work by; but, take our part, for

without thee we have no power." Jehovah came to their help, *the Ethiopians fled* in the direction of Egypt, and Asa's army pursued them as far as Gerar and annihilated them; then the army attacked the cities about Gerar and took back with them great spoil.

"These victories over inferior numbers may easily be paralleled or surpassed by numerous striking examples from secular history. The odds were greater at Agincourt, where at least sixty thousand French were defeated by not more than twenty thousand Englishmen; at Marathon the Greeks routed a Persian army ten times as numerous as their own. For the most part, victorious generals have been ready to acknowledge the succoring arm of the God of battles. Shakespeare's Henry V after Agincourt speaks altogether in the spirit of Asa's prayer:—

'O God, thy arm was here;
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all'" (Bennett).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and brake down the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, verse 3. The religion of the Canaanites is interesting to us chiefly because of the influence that it exerted upon the religion of Israel. In every place where a god was believed to manifest himself in a special way the Canaanites established a sanctuary, usually consisting of a space surrounded with a wall and open to the sky. Over a hundred places in Canaan are attested as holy by the meaning of their names, by the rites that were practiced there, or by the evidence of archæology. An essential part of the equipment of a high place was a *massebha* or "standing stone," which constituted a *bethel,* or "abode of deity," and served in primitive times at once as temple, image and altar. The excavations have revealed such stones in the high places of all the cities in the Canaanite level. The *ashera,* or sacred post, was also an indispensable accessory of Canaanite high places. The *massebha* served orginally both as idol and as altar. Subsequently a separate stone, or mound of earth, was set apart for purposes of sacrifice.—Condensed from an article in The Pilgrim Teacher, by Professor Lewis Bayles Paton.

The Asherim, verse 3. These columns of wood, or sacred trees, were symbols of the goddess Asherah, and were a survival of the ancient tree worship. "Under the very shadow of the telegraph pole, we find the tree worshippers of India," says a writer in The World Outlook. "Many kinds of trees are worshipped in India for many kinds of reasons. Some are supposed to be the abode of demons who must be propitiated. The sacred Bo tree under which Buddha received enlightenment is worshipped by pilgrims who come in thousands.

"In some small villages where there are more women than men, it often happens that there are no men of equal caste to the girl whose time has come to marry. Since the tree represents a deity which can assume any rank or caste, the parents of a marriageable daughter who has become a burden to the family, take her to the village tree-god and marry her to him. She is bound to the tree, and left either to the mercy of the prowling wild beasts, or to be rescued by the first male of a lower caste who is in search of a helpmeet."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When and why was the Hebrew nation divided? About which kingdom, Israel or Judah, were last Quarter's lessons? What kings of that kingdom did we hear about, and what is your appraisement of each? What led to the captivity of that kingdom? Who was the first king of Judah?

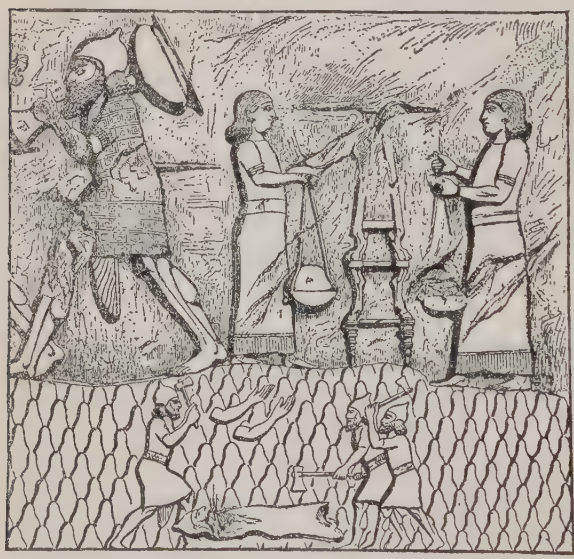
The Reign of Rehoboam. In our first lesson this year we saw Rehoboam rejected by the Northern Tribes and the Kingdom divided. During his seventeen years' reign as King of Judah Rehoboam lost two thirds of his kingdom, lost the glories of the temple to Shishak of Egypt, and set up idolatrous shrines where rites were practised to which Jeroboam's calf-worship in Israel was infinitely superior.

The Reign of Abijah. Rehoboam was succeeded by his son Abijah. Abijah's brief reign of three years (according to the Hebrew reckoning, one

whole year and parts of two others) was mainly occupied in warfare with Jeroboam, whom he defeated with half as large a force. He "walked in all the sins of his father," and was succeeded on his death by his son Asa.

Asa's Early Reign in Judah. Asa came to the throne in the last year of Jeroboam, King of Israel. During his long reign of forty-one years there were eight kings on the throne of Israel: Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Tibni, and Ahab. Our lesson tells of the early events during Asa's reign, down to his pursuit of Zerah as far as Gerar.

As Asa returned from his victory over Zerah, he was met by the prophet Azariah. Instead of greeting the king with words of congratulation and praise, the prophet warned him that he must remain loyal to God, and urged him to complete his reforms. Maacah, the queen mother, had erected a dreadful image of Astarte in Jerusalem, and this, Asa had ground to dust and buried in the Valley of the Kidron. He also deposed his mother from queenly rank. In the fifteenth year of his reign he assembled a great convocation at Jerusalem and the people ratified a covenant to seek Jehovah with all their heart and with all their soul.



Assyrian Representation of the Destruction of Idols

How Asa Mortgaged his Kingdom. Baasha, who came to the throne of Israel in 913 B. C., was an ambitious sovereign. He entered into an alliance with Ben-hadad of Damascus. He fortified Ramah, about six miles north of Jerusalem, and thus commanded the passageway leading to Jerusalem, Asa's capital. Asa felt unequal to the task of dislodging his enemy unaided: he stripped the temple and his palace of their treasures and sent them to Damascus to purchase the aid of Ben-hadad. Ben-hadad sent his armies to attack the cities of Israel, and Baasha was forced to leave Ramah. Asa then destroyed the fortifications of Ramah and used the stone and timber to fortify Geba and Mizpah.

While Asa thus accomplished his immediate desire, he mortgaged his Kingdom, as it were, to Syria, for Ben-hadad seems to have regarded Judah as a subject kingdom. In Ben-hadad's son's reign, Judah and Israel united against the Syrians as their common foe. This was the beginning of that long series of wars which weakened both kingdoms and made them an easier prey for the later Assyrian conquests. The prophet Hanani told Asa he had acted foolishly in relying on the King of Syria rather than upon God, and his words so angered the king that he imprisoned the prophet. Asa died in 876 B. C.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Make sure that your pupils understand that our last Quarter's lessons all dealt with the Kingdom of Israel, and that this Quarter's lessons will all deal with the Kingdom of Judah. Have the sketch map, page 42, drawn today upon your blackboard.

The *City of David* was *Jerusalem*, the capital of the Kingdom of Judah.

Mareshah, where Asa defeated Zerah, was among the Low Hills (Shephelah) which separate the tableland of Judah from the low-lying coastland. Some

ruins there are still called Marash. Asa pursued the enemy as far as *Gerar,* a town a few miles south of Gaza, near the coast.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

The beginning of a new Quarter's lessons is a good time to stop and consider whether you are teaching with success. If you are doing all the talking, if your pupils are not interested in studying the lesson in advance, if they are not eager to take part in the lesson discussion—are you a successful teacher? If you have time enough in your lesson period for all that your pupils wish to say and all that you wish to lead them to say and to tell them—are you a successful teacher?

In no class should it be necessary to consume time in the reading of the lesson. In younger classes obviate the necessity for this by asking each pupil each week to write on a slip of paper, "I have read the lesson" or "I have not read the lesson." Have the papers dated and signed, and at the end of the Quarter report upon these slips.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SOURCE OF PERSONAL AND NATIONAL POWER

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with a talk about the different viewpoints of the writers of Kings and of Chronicles. Question your pupils about these books, their purpose, their characteristics (see pp. 20-21).

Compare the two accounts of Asa's reforms, 1 K. 15.9-24, and 2 Ch. 15 and 16, and bring out their different viewpoints. Chronicles tells how the prophet's influence led the king to make his reforms; Kings omits this. Kings mentions Asa's destruction of idols and his war with Israel, but Chronicles points out that the long peace was the reward of Asa's seeking Jehovah and then his continuous wars were the penalty of his later unfaithfulness to Jehovah. This thought of the connection between obedience to God and national prosperity, and disobedience and national disaster, runs through the Books of Chronicles.

In the words of a man of great spiritual vision, "The whole history of Israel and Judah was one long illustration of the truth which the chronicler is constantly repeating. And in deepest truth the sure defense of our national prosperity is the same as theirs, and it is still the case that 'righteousness exalts a nation.' Asa's experience is still true, that obedience to God brings rest, often outward tranquillity, always inward calm."

Asa's Prayer. It seems to me that this prayer contains the very essence of what ought to be the Christian attitude in reference to all the conditions and threatening dangers and conflicts of life; and so I wish to run over it, and bring out the salient points of it, as typical of what ought to be our disposition.

I. The wholesome consciousness of our own impotence. If we look fairly in the face our duties, our tasks, our dangers, the possibilities of life and its certainties, the more humbly we think of our own capacity, the more wisely we shall think about God, and the more truly we shall estimate ourselves. And if we will do that, however apparently easy may be our course, and however richly endowed in mind, body, or estate we may be, if we all do that honestly, we shall find that we each are like "the man with ten thousand" that has to meet "the King that comes against him with twenty thousand"; and we shall look about us, and shall not keep our eyes on the horizon, and on the levels of earth, but we shall look up to see if there is not an Ally that we can bring into the field to redress the balance, and to make our ten as strong as the opposing twenty.

II. Summoning God into the field should follow wholesome self-distrust. If we know ourselves to be hopelessly outnumbered, and send to God for reinforcements, he will clash his sword into the scale, and make it go down. Asa turns to God and says, "Thou only canst trim the scales and make the lighter of the two the heavier one by casting thy might into it. So help us, O Lord our God!"

III. Courageous advance should follow self-distrust and summoning God by faith. It is well when self-distrust leads to confidence when, as Charles Wesley has it in his great hymn:

". . . I am weak,
But confident in self-despair."

But that is not enough. It is better when self-distrust and confidence in God lead to courage. And Asa continues: "Help us, for we rely on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude."

IV. And now the last point that I would notice is this—the all-powerful plea which God will answer. "Thou art my God, let not man prevail against thee." That prayer covers two things. You may be quite sure that if you have made God's cause yours he will make your cause his, and you will not be beaten.—Condensed from Expositions of Scripture, by Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

The Word of Azariah. Azariah sets before Asa what might be called a doctrine of Divine reciprocity (15.2). There is hardly a better statement in the Scripture of the co-working of the Divine and human factors than this word of the prophet's: "Jehovah is with you while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." The word shows a high conception of religious truth.

In many ancient religions men bow down and worship their gods in a thoroughly abject fashion, feeling completely helpless in the presence of the gods. Many heathen systems today are religious in that they recognize the Divine factor, but are helpless, in that they are submissive to their gods as to a fate. At the other extreme are the religions that exalt man overmuch. But this doctrine of the prophet keeps the middle ground, and to keep the middle ground in religious thinking is at times difficult. It is easier to go to extremes on one side and another than to hold to the truth which lies between the extremes. This prophet of God achieved this marvelous feat of spiritual balance.

The chosen nation could very easily have lapsed into fatalism. Placed between the great empires of the east and south, the nation might readily have thought of itself as between the upper and nether millstone; or, on the other hand, the people might have thought that their own strength had brought them victories as over against the great powers around them. It is interesting to see in a situation like this how firmly the prophet of old grasped the truth: the Lord would help Israel, but he would not do everything; men could help, but they could not do everything.—Bishop Francis J. McConnell, in The Sunday School Journal.

The Need of Leadership. "They fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw the Lord his God was with him" (15.9). In every sphere of life it is true that people are only waiting for a lead to do the right thing. They know what ought to be done, but they have no initiative, and when the person with initiation does present himself he finds himself amazed at the largeness of his following. Suppose you found yourself at some evening service in church with the choir and the organist absent, you would think for a moment that you were not likely to have a very bright service. But presently someone stands up and leads off some hymn which everyone knows and calls on all to help. You are amazed at the volume of sound; you hear the people in the pew behind you—you had thought them dumb—singing with all their hearts. But it needs the leader to draw out of the congregation the music that is in it. So, too, "Many persons can feel a speech who cannot make one." The crowd is on the side of the man speaking brave truth, and when he utters himself others range themselves with him. Bagehot insists that the man who becomes the leader is not the original thinker but the man who, like Sir Robert Peel, has "an uncommon faculty for expressing the common thought." The servant of God must always remember this for his cheer, that whenever he stands up, regardless of himself, for what is true, he will find others "falling to him in abundance."—Dr. R. Bruce Taylor.

The Source of National Power. In a remarkable document signed by the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland, is the following:

"It has become clear today, both through the arbitrament of war and through the tests of rebuilding a life of peace, that neither education, science, diplomacy, nor commercial prosperity, when allied with a belief in material force as the ultimate power, is a real foundation for the ordered development of the world's life. The spirit of good-will among men rests on spiritual forces, the hope of a 'brotherhood of humanity' reposes on the deeper spiritual fact of the 'Fatherhood of God.' In the recognition of the fact of that Fatherhood and of the Divine purpose for the world which are central to the message of Christianity, we shall discover the ultimate foundation for the reconstruction of an ordered and harmonious life for all men."

It would be difficult to express one's thought in language more significant. The idealism which as Americans we cherish; the program of national integrity in which we fundamentally believe, and the brotherhood of man for which every right-minded person should work, must of necessity cause all thoughtful persons to turn to the spiritual resources of the race as the true solvent of our problems.

Liberty, Freedom and Democracy are terms which make large demands upon a people. The greater these privileges in society the greater must be the degree of individual character fitted to use them, and without a moral and spiritual point of view, a suitable type of character cannot be produced.

On this subject no higher voice has ever spoken than the Man of Galilee.—William G. McAdoo, in The Christian Herald.

The Source of Personal Power. Two men in a sailboat were heading for Vineyard Sound between the island of Martha's Vineyard and the mainland, through which a swift tide races.

"Can we make it?" asked one. "The wind is dead against us."

"Oh, yes!" said the other cheerfully. "The tide's on our side. Here, man, give me that tiller! You go take a reef there while I steer!"

"Why, you're heading for the very worst of it!" gasped the first man, who was a stranger to those waters. "I was going for that smooth—"

And then he forgot all further speech in obeying the swift, short commands of the man at the helm. Harder and faster blew the wind. Choppier and choppier grew the sea. Looking at those on-coming surges, soon to drench them with spray, the stranger could not see that the boat was making any progress at all.

Suddenly the helmsman sent out a joyful roar. "Through!" he cried. "Through! And we beat the record at that!"

An hour or so later they talked it over in front of a blazing driftwood fire. It had been a wonderful sail, they agreed, but there were some things the visitor did not understand.

"Why, it's all a matter of the tide," explained the helmsman. "If that's with you, you can win through in spite of anything else. If that isn't, heaven help you! It's good, of course, to have both with you—but if you can have only one, it's the tide that counts. And the tide never seems to run as strong as it does when the wind is against it. The wind apparently resents that extra strong tide and piles up all the waves it can in front to frighten you back or off into those smooth places you looked at so longingly. Oh, yes! I saw you.

"'What was the matter with them?' Nothing—if you had happened to want to stay right where you were instead of getting home for supper. They were smooth because there was no tide there to offer any resistance and the wind had a straight run. You wouldn't have been splashed, to be sure, but you wouldn't have got on very much with nothing to help you against that wind."

"Wait a minute!" said the other man, with a quick smile. "Or else remember all you said while I get out my notebook and pencil. I have never before found half so good an illustration of what it means to be on God's side—doing his will—no matter how much the wind of public opinion or the force of your own circumstances or desires may blow against you. You may yield gracefully to the easiest way and say, 'Circumstances were too much for me,' or 'Everything seemed to point that way,' and you'll have an easy, smooth, shallow life, but you will not get anywhere or be anything better than driftwood in the end. Or you may cast in your lot with the tide—as we did today. Things look impossibly hard and you get buffeted and splashed and wet to the skin, but you win through to the haven where you would be."—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. The Books of Kings and Chronicles. See our Introduction, pages 20 to 24.

2. To set ourselves right with God first, and then to claim his help in spiritual conflict with the powers of evil, is still the way of victory.—Dr. J. M. Willoughby.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the Septuagint Version call Chronicles? 2. What is the Syriac title of these books? 3. Who were the rulers of Judah between Asa and Athaliah? 4. Who was Athaliah, and what characteristics did she inherit? 5. What were some of the evil deeds of Athaliah? 6. What women noted in history have exerted an evil influence? 7. Is there any truth in Kipling's poem about the Female of the Species? 8. What promise was repeatedly made to

David and his descendants? (2 S. 7.13; 1 K. 11.36; 15.4; 2 K. 8.19). 9. What characteristics of Jehoiada does the lesson reveal? 10. What was the "testimony" that was given Joash? 11. How did the people prove the sincerity of their covenant? 12. What is treason? 13. Who was the traitor in Judah, Athaliah or Jehoiada? Why? 14. When there is general dissatisfaction with the ruling powers, what should be done? 15. Is a revolution ever necessary in a nation's life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A RULER WHO RELIED ON GOD

Beginning the Lesson. I have read of a maid who had been brought up by an aunt noted for her untidiness, untruthfulness, laziness, and dishonesty. People who employed the girl were agreeably surprised to find her in no way like the older woman. "How does it happen that you are so different from your aunt, after living with her so many years?" some one asked her. "Well, you see," she answered thoughtfully, "I suppose it was on account of her good example." "Her good example"—and her questioner stopped in sheer astonishment. "Yes," the girl continued. "You see it was this way. As I grew up, and saw her doing something I thought wasn't right, I'd say to myself: 'Well, now, there's a good example for you. Don't you never do such a thing as that.'" Such was the kind of good example which has been set us by the kings of the Northern Kingdom about whom we have been studying.

Under what king was Solomon's kingdom divided? Why? Over which kingdom did Rehoboam continue to rule? What "good example," speaking after the manner of the wise maid just quoted, did Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, set his people? The great evil of idolatry rapidly spread in both kingdoms.

Asa's Good Reign in Judah. Nearly twenty years ago a missionary in China was met on his morning walk by a young Chinese student who stopped him to say how useless it was for him to stay and work among the Chinese, for he was despised by them all. "If you stay here a hundred years you will not have won as many friends as you have fingers," he said contemptuously. Five years ago that Chinese student came to the missionary and asked to be taught all about Jesus. "All the city says that you are guilty of doing good," was the reason he gave for coming.

Asa, the third king of Judah, was "guilty of doing good." What does our lesson say he did?

"Of Asa it is said that his heart 'was perfect with the Lord all his days.' Hezekiah, in his prayer, said, 'I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.' What is meant by such a heart? Is it freedom from all moral impurity? Does it mean that there was no vital imperfection in such men's hearts? Evidently not. It simply means that their whole heart was enlisted in serving God according to their light and ability. There was a wholeness of purpose; there was a singleness of aim. So now, he who loves God with his whole heart loves him with a perfect heart. He is not governed by double motives. He does not give half of his heart to God and the other half to self. He serves God heartily, hence perfectly. If all Christians would do this, the world would awaken to the fact that Christianity is from heaven."

A Modern Ruler Who Relied on God. A few years ago Khama, King of the Bamangwatos in Bechuanaland, South Africa, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his conversion to Christianity. It was the fiftieth anniversary of his being led out of the bondage of superstition and ignorance and sin into the glorious light of Christian freedom. Khama was twenty-five years old when he was converted, and he at once began to spread the Christian faith among his sixty thousand subjects. It is said that his career as a Christian has scarcely a rival in the whole history of missions. At his jubilee native elders told about the great change that had taken place under Khama's rule, how idolatry and superstition had disappeared, intoxicating liquor had been excluded from the land, education and many other blessings of Christianity had become theirs. In his address King Khama said: "If we continue in the service of God, we shall continue to be a nation. . . . If we honor God as we honor the things that belong to this world, we shall be a truly great nation."

Self-Confidence. Tom went to college and was at once chosen to wrestle. He had good luck in several contests, and on his visit home he said boastfully,

"I've pretty good brawn and a pretty good method. I'm not afraid of being beaten by anybody." Then Tom had the tonsilitis and was sent to the college infirmary. He was almost over it when the time came for a prearranged tussle with the "young giant" of a neighboring college. The doctors forbade his wrestling. But he went—and was thoroughly beaten. What does self-sufficiency mean? Almost everyone who founds his confidence on a feeling of physical vigor has an experience like Tom's. Physical vigor alone is a very poor basis for confidence.

"I don't see why I may not run the machine as well as Jane," complains Clara. "I am a year younger, but I am larger and stronger." "The line has to be drawn somewhere," her father answers. In her extra year we hope Clara will learn that not only size and strength but judgment is needed in driving a car. Until judgment is gained, strong and vigorous people are overconfident.

Experience rightly gives confidence. A class at school was in an uproar. The young man in charge could not control it, although he had brawn to spare. A teacher from across the hall came in and all became quiet. Why? "We felt," said one of the boys afterward, "that she knew all about it, and she would put up with no nonsense." That is to say, she carried with her an attitude of assurance based on experience. Your thought and feeling adds to or subtracts from your power and your results.

Confidence that Comes from Reliance on God. Read Exodus 17.8-11. Do you suppose that when the Israelites saw Moses standing there with the rod, the spectacle had any effect on the result of the battle? What effect on a game has belief in the leader? What effect upon your life has confidence in your Leader?

Pray for wisdom and seek knowledge in your undertaking. Enter into the making of a life with the consciousness that with God for you, you cannot fail.

"But," you say, "people have failed who set out prayerfully to do God's will. There was Huss who was burned at the stake." Read Browning's "Incident of the French Camp." Did that boy think he had failed? Huss was engaged in the struggle for liberty and he did not fail. The fact that he died does not alter the truth at all. Elijah thought he had failed when he cried, "I, only I, am left, and they seek my life to take it away," but we know that he had not failed. He would have failed if he had made peace with Ahab instead of relying upon God's help in combating Ahab and his idolatrous practices.

The Christian's Life. She was only a tiny girl, unused to travelling, and it happened that in the course of the day her train was obliged to cross two branches of a river and several wide streams. The river seen in advance always awakened doubt and fear in the child. She did not understand how it could be safely crossed. As they drew near the river, however, a bridge appeared and furnished a way over. Two or three times the experience was repeated; and finally the child leaned back with a long breath of relief and confidence. "Somebody has put bridges for us all the way," she said in trusting content. That is the Christian's life. God has built bridges for us all the way.—Forward.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

The man who on himself relies
Shall fail, however strong and wise;
But he who grips the strength of God
Shall walk the path the heroes trod.—Thomas Curtis Clark.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. Begin a new note-book and entitle it "Prophets and Kings in Judah." Today write I. A Bad and a Good King of Judah: Rehoboam and Asa.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where did the events of this lesson take place? 2. Do daughters "take after their mothers"? 3. What kind of woman would you expect Jezebel's daughter to be? 4. Was Athaliah better or worse than her mother? 5. What does Prov. 14.11 say? 6. What was the relation of Joash to Athaliah? 7. To Jezebel? 8. To Jehosheba? 9. Why did Jehoiada so carefully plan for the guarding of the young prince? 10. What is the meaning of "took an oath of them," verse 4? 11. How was a baby in Egypt saved from a cruel death, and what did he afterwards do for his people? 12. What babe in the New Testament was taken to another country to save his life from a cruel ruler?

THE LORD PRESERVES JOASH

Golden Text

Jehovah preserveth all them that love him. Psalm 145.20

LESSON 2 Kings 11.1 to 12.16 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 145.10-21
REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Kings 11.18-20; 2 Chronicles 23.1-21; Matthew 2.13-23

2 KINGS 11.1 Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons that were slain, even him and his nurse, *and put them* in the bedchamber; and they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not slain; 3 and he was with her hid in the house of Jehovah six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land.

4 And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son. 11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about. 12 Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, *Long* live the king.

13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard *and of* the people, she came to the people into the house of Jehovah: 14 and she looked, and, behold, the king stood by the pillar, as the manner was, and the captains and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason! treason! 15 And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth between the ranks; and him that followeth her slay with the sword. For the priest said, Let her not be slain in the house of Jehovah. 16 So they made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people; between the king also and the people.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A CRITICAL TIME IN THE HOUSE OF DAVID, verse 1. The death of Ahaziah would have deprived Athaliah of her position as queen-mother had his son succeeded to the throne. She prevented this by putting to death *all the seed royal* of the house of Judah, all that might be claimants to the throne, and then she usurped the throne. Her reign was the only break in the succession of kings of the house of David in all the history of Judah, while at this time in the Northern Kingdom the fourth dynasty already occupied the throne. Athaliah was the daughter of King Ahab of Israel, who became the wife of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. See the Historical Background. Her mother was probably Jezebel: she resembled Jezebel in masterfulness, unscrupulousness, and cruelty. As Jezebel controlled Ahab, so Athaliah controlled her husband Jehoram and her son Ahaziah. She was a fanatical worshipper of Baal, and as Jezebel introduced Baal-worship into Israel, so did Athaliah into Judah. A temple to Baal was erected in Jerusalem, seemingly within the temple of Jehovah, and for it she plundered the latter of its sacred vessels, 2 Ch. 24.7. How was her power possible? Dr. George Adam Smith finds the explanation in (1) the support she derived from foreign troops whose presence was natural at the court of virtually a Phœnician princess, and by whose aid,

doubtless, she had achieved her usurpation; (2) the attractions of culture and the worship which she represented, and (3) she left untouched the worship in the temple. But above all there was the personality of the queen herself. She had a strong capacity for organizing.

II. AN UNSCRUPULOUS QUEEN CHECKMATED BY ANOTHER WOMAN, verses 2,3. *But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram* (Jehoram), *half-sister of Ahaziah* (she was not a daughter of Ahaziah's mother Athaliah), and the wife of Jehoiada, the priest (2 Ch. 20.11), frustrated Athaliah's plans. She managed to steal away *Joash,* one of Ahaziah's sons, and hide him in the *bedchamber,* the store-room where the mattresses and cushions that served for beds were kept, and then she hid him in the temple where he remained for six years. The temple was evidently a good hiding-place, little visited during Athaliah's reign!

III. THE PLANS OF JEHOIADA, verses 4-8. When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada, the priest, assembled the chief officers of the army (*the captains over hundreds of the Carites,* the foreign troops, *and of the guard*) and after pledging them to loyalty and secrecy he showed them the king's young son, and then unfolded to them his skillfully laid plan to place the lad upon the throne. "The guards (or the Levites) were divided into two great bodies. The first consisted of those who mounted guard on the Sabbath-day, as the kings went to the temple. These were to keep their usual position, in three detachments; the first at the porch of the palace, the second at one of the temple gates; the third at another, called, doubtless from its being the usual halting place of the guards the 'gate of the runners,' 2 K. 11.19. These were to keep their places to avoid suspicion. The second division consisted of those who attended the kings to the temple. These, on the present occasion, were to place themselves on the right and left hand of the young king, inside the temple, in order to protect his person, and to put to death anyone who came within the circle of rails which enclosed the royal seat or stand" (Stanley).

They obeyed Jehoiada's every command. Jehoiada armed the troops with spears and shields, perhaps with those which had been stored in the temple by David (2 S. 8.7). It has been suggested that it may have been the custom for the outgoing guard to leave their weapons for the use of the ingoing guard, and now both divisions were armed at once. The men were ranged in lines along the temple porch so as to enclose a space between it and the altar, and into this space the young prince Joash was brought.

IV. THE CORONATION OF JOASH, verse 12. Jehoiada *put the crown* upon Joash, and *gave him the testimony,* formally presented him with his special Roll of the Law: see Ex. 25.16; Dt. 17.18,19. The words *gave him* are added by the translators, as the italics in the Bible show, and the literal rendering is given in the margin, *put upon* him the crown and the testimony. It is suggested by Hebrew scholars that a difference of only a single letter would give the Hebrew word for "bracelets" instead of for "testimony." After Joash was anointed, the guards and the people *clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king.*

V. ATHALIAH IS SLAIN, verses 13-16. So quietly had the plan been carried out that the queen was taken completely by surprise when the joyous acclamations reached her ears at the palace. Unattended she rushed to the temple, and beheld the young king standing by the pillar, evidently the special position for a prince when crowned king, and heard the blowing of trumpets and the shouts of the people. "Who was that child standing in the royal place? Where had he come from? How had he been hidden all these years? What was all this frenzy of rejoicing, this flare of trumpets, these ranks of grim men with weapons in their hands? The stunning truth fell on her; but, though she felt that all was lost, not a whit did she blench, but fronted them all proudly as ever. One cannot but admire the dauntless woman 'magnificent in sin'" (Maclaren). Her anger she expressed in the customary way, by rending her clothes. *Treason! treason!* she cried, but no one hastened to her defense. At the command of Jehoiada, the ranks opened to let her pass. He would not have her slain within the temple precincts, and had kept her encompassed by his guards that no one might come to her rescue. *Him that followeth her slay with the sword,* he cried. *She went by the way of the horses' entry to the King's house: and there was she slain.* "She who killed without compunction the innocents who stood between her and her ambitions was pitilessly slain, and all th-

land rejoiced in her death" (Maclaren). "From this end, so terrible and merited by her crimes, learn, O King of the Jews, and never forget, that in heaven kings have a severe Judge, innocence an Avenger, and orphans a Father" (Racine, in Athalie).

VI. WORSHIP REFORMED, verses 17,18. The priest received in the name of Jehovah the promise of loyalty of king and people. *The house of Baal,* built, as Josephus says, by Jehoram and Athaliah, they destroyed so thoroughly that it could never be restored, and *Mattam, the priest of Baal,* was slain.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Athaliah destroyed all the seed royal, verse 1. As late as the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a policy similar to this favorite Oriental method was followed by the Sultan of Turkey in order to rid himself of dangerous competitors. The most unnatural brutality has often been used to make a throne secure to its tyrannical occupant. In the large royal families of the East the half-brothers are not especially fond of each other. The mothers of the princes are often from diverse races and are frequently bitter enemies. Palace intrigues and revolutions are not uncommon.—Professor Elihu Grant, in the Sunday School World.

Put them in the bedchamber, verse 2. This was the room where the extra mattresses were stored. Even in the royal palace they did not sleep upon bedsteads, but upon mattresses. In the ordinary houses in Palestine today the inmates sleep upon blankets thrown upon the floor. In the daytime these are packed away along the wall or in a niche provided for them.

He was with her hid in the house of Jehovah six years, verse 3. He must have had a very quiet life, away from all companions. Children in Syria today have very different pastimes from those in our land. The Rev. Abraham Dimitrie Rihbany, writing in the Atlantic Monthly, describes the life he led as a boy in Syria. "The evenings were very dreary for the little ones. There were no children's story-books to read, and there was no one who could have read them if any of them had fallen into our hands. No pictures for the children, and none to cheer the blankness of those white-washed walls, which the smoke tinged with a murky hue. No toys of any kind. Now and then we fell spontaneously into a fit of laughter or played a game of hide and seek in the dark corners of the room. Now and then we were favored with a tale about a miracle happening in the graveyard, or about ghosts, or wild beasts which made the very hairs of our heads rise up with fear. Our peevishness and naughtiness had no 'psychological guidance.' When bribes, which were by no means of the most persuasive kind, failed, the chief remedy was, 'Be good or the camel will get you!' 'Listen, the hyena is coming! Right at the door!' The hyena, so terrible and so abundant in the surrounding woods and rocky hills, never failed to bring us to terms."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What sort of man was Ahab? What sort of king was he? What events during his reign have we studied? Who was his wife? What evils did she do?

The Reigns of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah. As we learned last week, Rehoboam, the first king of Judah, was succeeded by his son Abijah, and Abijah by his son Asa. Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, succeeded him. *Jehoshaphat* joined Ahab, King of Israel, in the third Syrian campaign; Ahab was killed in his effort to recover Ramoth-Gilead, and the prophet Jehu reproved Jehoshaphat for "helping the wicked." Two reforms are credited to Jehoshaphat: the sending out of princes, Levites, and priests with the Book of the Law of the Lord to teach the people in all the cities of Judah; and the appointing of judges. The Moabites and Ammonites came to wage battle against Jehoshaphat. The King's prayer for help was answered through Jahaziel, and he was wondrously delivered from his enemies.

Upon Jehoshaphat's death, *Jehoram,* his son, became the King of Judah. He had reigned with his father during his later years, and had signalized his power by putting six brothers to death. "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, for he had the daughter of Ahab (Athaliah) to wife." Trouble came

fast upon him. Edom and Libnah revolted from his rule, the Philistines and Arabians invaded the land and took away captive all his sons save Ahaziah, the youngest. A terrible disease seized him and he died, unhonored and unwept, "He departed without being desired."

Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother (Athaliah) was his counsellor to do wickedly." Ahaziah reigned less than a year. He allied himself with Jehoram, king of Israel, in the defense of Ramoth-Gilead, and went down to Jezreel to visit Jehoram as he lay there wounded. There Jehu slew Jehoram, and wounded the fleeing Ahaziah so that he died on reaching Megiddo. On the way to Samaria Jehu met the relatives of Ahaziah who were coming to pay him a friendly visit at court, and slew them all, forty-two in number. Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, then usurped the throne.

The Reign of Joash. The scene of our lesson is Jerusalem. South of the temple area there was a second court in which were the King's House and the House of the Daughter of Pharaoh, while south of this was the Great or Outer Court containing other buildings.

The great event in Joash's reign was the repairing of the temple. Planning for the repairs and completing them occupied many years. When Jehoiada, the aged priest, died, Joash showed his weakness. He hearkened unto the princes and allowed them to serve the Asherim and other idols, and when Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, reproved them, Joash ordered him stoned to death. "Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son." The Syrians invaded the land and captured Gath, but were bought off from attacking Jerusalem by Joash with "the hallowed things" in the temple. His end followed soon after, for his own servants murdered him in his bed.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

This is a good time to teach the use of a concordance. The references under *resist* and its derivatives are not numerous. Let one pupil give out the references and let the remainder of the class find them, and thus the work will move rapidly.

Of course your pupils know the order of the books of the Bible and can turn readily to any book. In classes of young pupils the list of books should be recited in their sequence occasionally. Do not take the time from the lesson for this, but let each recite to another, before or after the class period.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
GOD'S PURPOSES CANNOT BE FRUSTRATED: THE CHILD AS A NATIONAL ASSET

Beginning the Lesson. When Mutesa, the ruler of four million subjects in the kingdom of Uganda, British East Africa, died in 1884, it was an anxious time for all who heard the news. The reason is given in Uganda's White Man of Work: For generations, the death of a monarch in Uganda had been the signal for robbery and bloodshed. People, sometimes to the number of two thousand, had been captured in the highways and offered as sacrifices at the grave of the dead ruler. Until the chiefs met and chose a new king from among the sons of the late monarch, no one was sure of his life. Upon the crowning of the fortunate prince, all his brothers who had been held as prisoners would be slain except the eldest, who, according to Uganda custom, never sat on the throne.

We have reached in our studies a critical time for the House of David. "Once from a struggle within the royal household itself, a second time from an invasion of Arabs, a third time from the revolution in the massacres of Jehu's accession, the dynasty had been thinned and thinned, till all the outlying branches of those vast polygamous households had been reduced to the single family of Ahaziah, 2 Ch. 21.4,17; 2 K. 10.14."

God's Purposes Cannot Be Frustrated. I shall establish the throne of his kingdom forever, was the promise made to David in 2 S. 7.13. In Abijah's prophecy to Jeroboam, when he told him that he should rule over ten tribes, he said that unto Solomon's son Rehoboam one tribe should be given, "that David

my servant may have a lamp alway before me in Jerusalem," 1 K. 11.36. In the record of Abijah's reign we read that he did evil, "nevertheless for David's sake did Jehovah his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him," 1 K. 15.4. Jehoram likewise did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. "Howbeit Jehovah would not destroy Judah, for David his servant's sake as he promised him to give unto him a lamp for his children alway." And the light of David's lamp did not fail, for although Athaliah thought she had put to death all of the royal line that Jehu had not slain, one little lad escaped the massacre, and the house of David was protected till the coming of David's Greater Son, to whom the Lord God gave the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end, Luke 1.32,33.

Athaliah thought she had annulled that promise; she thought she had put to death all of the royal line. She doubtless also thought that she could overthrow the worship of Jehovah, that Baal would become the god of the people of Judah. In December, 1906, in a little village on the Baltic, a manifesto was read in all the churches and halls which abolished not only the rule of the Czar of Russia but of the Lord! God's rule cannot be overthrown.

When is Resistance to Authority Right? A high school boy was sent to the Principal's office for refusing to obey his teacher. "I made a drawing when the art teacher was in our room last week," the boy explained. "That drawing was to be completed this week. It can't be found. Miss Smith said I must make another. I said I wouldn't. It was not my fault that it was lost. If I obeyed unfair commands like that, I'd be a slave."

"Your father thinks the present distribution of taxes unfair," said the Principal, "but he is paying his taxes. He is going to vote for the other political party next year, he says. But he is paying."

"I don't vote for six years," said the boy, smiling.

"But you can appeal," said the Principal. "You can appeal to me, and to the Superintendent, and to the School Board, and to the County Superintendent, and to the State Superintendent, and to the State Board."

"But what will I be doing meanwhile?" asked the boy.

"Obeying," said the Principal.

"Is defiance never right, then?"

"Yes, it is sometimes right. You can refuse and get suspended, and keep on refusing, and get dismissed. Then you have two courses open. The truant officer will look you up. You can take up the rôle of martyr, have your case advertised, perhaps gather supporters, and bring on a school fight in the community. Or you can gather a crowd and inaugurate a little revolution. The militant suffragettes did it one way, and our Revolutionary Forefathers took the other course. If you feel that you have a Great Cause for which you are willing to bleed and die, you should go ahead. If you fail, and the cause is really great, it will come up again in the future and be won, for it will have God behind it. Revolution for the sake of a great cause, after every legal and peaceful means fails, is right, but only then. Are you going to start one? Have you a great cause?"

A little everyday comedy such as this and a national tragedy such as the crimes of government that led to the crowning of Joash and the death of Athaliah, alike show when resistance to authority is justified.

The Justification for the Revolution. It had a double justification: in the first place, the ruling queen had seized her place by force and was not really entitled to rule; in the second place, the nature of the queen's rule was such as to imperil everything for which the chosen people had stood. It is very easy for those who condemn revolutionary movements to take partial or one-sided views. Revolutionary procedure is not ideal, but every revolution which has helped humanity on and up has been better than that state of things to which it put an end. "Can it be possible," some one asks, "that such a bloody revolution as that of France over one hundred years ago can have been the starting point of much wholesome democratic advance?" Those who ask such questions see only the terrors of riot and butchery. They forget the thousand years of oppression which made the revolution practically inevitable. Some exceedingly critical students find fault with biblical passages like that of today which represent priest-led revolutions as leading to religious reform. They forget the violation of Israel's best traditions by the ruling powers. In a previous lesson we

have seen that the God of Israel did not intend that the physical forces should be forever counted on the side of heathenism, and so the eyes of Elisha's young companion were opened that he might see the mountain full of chariots and horses. Today the lesson teaches us that the political forces were not to be allowed to remain in the hands of those hostile to the religion of the true God.

In other words, the priest of Judah believed that spiritual interests really had the right of way in Judah. He saw very clearly that the only reason for Judah's existence as a separate political power was in her devotion to the true religion. Apart from that religion there was no real reason why the kingdom should not be tributary to Syria or to Egypt, or to any of the other surrounding empires. But the chosen people had broken from Egypt with a religious motive. For that people now to become subservient to another heathen ruler would be to nullify all her splendid past history. And so the priest planned a revolution. He believed that his God had the right of way.—Bishop Francis J. McConnell, in The Sunday School Journal.

Lincoln's Faith. "The purposes of the almighty are perfect and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perfect them in advance." This was Lincoln's faith. On one occasion during the war when the worst fears prevailed, a senator called on the President and said that if only the nation would do right, Providence would restore its unity and prosperity. "My faith is greater than yours," returned Lincoln, with face aglow. "I not only believe that if we do right, God will lead us safely out of this wilderness and restore our dissevered Union, but I also believe that he will compel us to do right in order that he may do these things. Not so much because we desire them, as that they accord with his plans of dealing with this nation, in the midst of which he means to establish justice. I think he means that we shall do more than we have yet done in the furtherance of his plans, and he will open the way for our doing it."

The Child as a National Asset. Forward-looking thoughts: the phrase is from Wordsworth, who says:

> A child more than all other gifts
> That earth can offer to declining man,
> Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts.

An editorial in The Christian Century quotes the phrase and comments:

"Jehosheba's and Jehoiada's thoughts were forward-looking in this critical time in the nation's history. This is one of many reasons why the home in which there are children is happier than the one where there are none. Life is linked to the future and promises to renew its interest with each generation. The man who is toiling for his own generation alone usually finds satiety before middle life is reached. He who is spurred by the hope of better opportunities for those who shall come after him can continue to work with enthusiasm even into old age. George Eliot uses these lines of Wordsworth on the title-page of Silas Marner, to suggest the transformation that came to the hermit weaver, warped almost out of human semblance by a wrong done in the far past, when the forward look was awakened by the presence of a helpless little child."

"The training of a young prince is a sacred trust in view of the potentialities for good or for evil bound up with his unfolding life," writes Dr. C. R. Brown. "And what shall we say of the training of the young in this land where every man is an uncrowned king? The ruling forces in the Republic are not in the White House—they are in your house and in mine and in his. The government is not at Washington—the government is here and there and yonder wherever the people are. The rearing of all the boys and girls in a country where the will of the people is the law of the land becomes a sacred trust.

"'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' It is the underlying principle in all sound training here with us as in Judea of old. An honest reverence for God and a feeling of wholesome awe in the presence of moral obligation, these must of necessity take precedence over all other considerations in the development of that quality of mind and heart which will make a people competent to rule their land."

Theodore Roosevelt's message is: "Where possible, the thing to be done for a child is to provide a home for it. . . . There can be no more important subject than that of caring for the children, because in caring for the children of today, we are taking care of the nation of tomorrow."

For Discussion. 1. Historical characters recalled by Athaliah: Cleopatra, Zenobia, The Dowager Empress of China, Bloody Mary, Katharine of Russia, Katharine de Medici.

2. The persistence with which the people of Judah held to the government of the descendants of David shows a common human trait. It was remarkable during the late War how many of the strict Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics, Atheists, who suddenly rose to notoriety as conscientious objectors, turned out to be descendants of Quakers. Traditions, prejudices, or principles descend from parent to child through many generations, however hidden by outward circumstances.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why ought the disciples to have expected Jesus to rise from the dead? 2. Why did they not? 3. Which was "the first day of the week"? 4. Because of this incident, what adjective is always applied to Thomas? 5. What does Paul say about the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15? 6. In 2 Cor. 5.15-17? 7. In Eph. 2.4,5? 8. In Col. 3.1? 9. Why do we celebrate Easter Day? 10. Why should the Christian have no fear of death?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A BOY SAVED FOR A GREAT CAREER

Beginning the Lesson. Said Mr. Chadband in Bleak House to "Poor Joe," "You are a human boy, my friend, a human boy. Oh, glorious to be a human boy!"

"O running stream of sparkling joy
To be a soaring human boy!"

Poor Joe's boyhood was such a hard one. "I've always been a-moving and a-moving on ever since I was born," he said to a policeman. "Where can I possibly move to, sir, more nor I do move?" "Worritted to skin and bones," as he was by his persecutors, Joe nevertheless showed by his pluck what he might have become had his life been spared.

What countless numbers among the world's great men have never known that it was glorious to be a human boy! Henry M. Stanley, who found Livingstone, who rescued Emin Pasha, and whose explorations remade the map of Africa, was another "unfortnet." His father died soon after his birth, and before he was five years old Henry was placed by an uncle in the workhouse, where he suffered the most cruel, brutal treatment. He had never heard about his mother, but one day a woman visitor was pointed out to him as his mother. "I started with a burning face, and directed a shy glance at her," he said long afterward, "but perceived she was regarding me with a look of cool, critical scrutiny. I had expected to feel a gush of tenderness towards her, but her expression was so chilly that the valves of my heart closed with a snap." Henry finally ran away from the workhouse, but none of his relatives would keep him, and he shipped as a cabin boy on a vessel bound for New Orleans, where he was once more brutally treated. At New Orleans he ran away again, and seeing a pleasant looking man standing in front of a store he asked him if he did not want a boy. This gentleman afterwards adopted him and gave him the name which he made so famous. The two years that intervened before his new father's death were "the golden period of my life," he says; for that brief space he knew that it is glorious to be a human boy.

Probably little Joash never knew that boyhood was glorious. Who was he? How was his life in danger as a babe? How was he saved? His aunt and his uncle were kind to him and taught him, but the years in hiding must have been lonely and dreary. He did not know that it is "glorious to be a human boy," until a great day came to him. Who will tell about that day?

What Will the Boy Become? Everything was done just as Jehoiada the priest commanded. Jehoiada brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony, and they made him king. And it was Jehoiada who made the covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people. Will the seven-year-old king keep the covenant with God? Will he rule wisely? We shall see. Just now he is obedient to the will of his uncle the priest, and does whatever he bids him do.

Thus it is with most seven-year-old lads today. They obey their parents. But will they keep the covenant with God, and rule themselves wisely when they

are older? You know the picture of Baby Stuart, Van Dyke's portrait of James II of England as an infant, the charming, round-cheeked baby face with the tight-fitting cap above it. It is perhaps the best-known picture in the world. There are two million copies of it in American homes. But did you ever see a portrait of King James the Second? Little good can be said of James II who as Baby Stuart seemed to be "trailing clouds of glory."

The Worth of a Baby Boy. In a remote district of Wales a baby boy lay dangerously ill. The widowed mother walked five miles in the night through drenching rain to get a doctor. The doctor hesitated about making the unpleasant trip. Would it pay? he questioned. He would receive no money for his services, and, besides, if the child's life was saved he would no doubt become only a poor laborer. But love for humanity and professional duty conquered, and the little life was saved. Years after, when this same child—Lloyd George—became Chancellor of the Exchequer, the old doctor said, "I never dreamt that in saving the life of that child on the farm hearth I was saving the life of the national leader of Wales."—Sunday School Chronicle.

What Shall we Do for the Children who Do not Have a Fair Start in Life? "It requires little thought to see that street children are not getting a fair chance," declares a writer in a New York Kindergarten Association pamphlet. "They do not receive the care, watchfulness and love that ought to be an indispensable part of every young child's life. Their home—a few small rooms shared with brothers and sisters, and perhaps a boarder or two, and presided over by parents who have to give their last bit of energy in the struggle for food and shelter—cannot afford that which ought to be the largest part of any child's education—a decent home.

"The one, of course, without whom there can be no home, is the mother. But when she has to leave early in the morning for a day at scrubbing, or washing, or rolling cigarettes, or running a sewing-machine, as a mother she has practically ceased to exist. The home which practically does not exist; the mother who is so work-driven, so far away, so ignorant, so poor, that as far as her children's needs are concerned, she does not exist; the swarming out on the streets to play, to fight their own battles, to build their own lives from the earliest years—these things are the common lot of hordes of tenement children.

"The children of the New York tenements are shut-outs. Early in the morning they leave their home, and are shut out—locked out. The street is their playground, their nursery, and their family dining room, for there, from a push-cart, they will buy for a few pennies their healthful and bountiful midday meal of pickles and sausage, or ice-cream. If they are cold in the street, they shiver and snuffle; if they are hot, they perspire or grow languid. If they get into mischief, a policeman is very likely to get them out. The last place they would think of going to when hungry, or hurt, or sick, would be home, for they are shut out of their home."

Are there children in your city or village who do not have a fair chance to get started right? Are there children who do not have the watchful care and love that should be every child's birthright? What is being done for these unfortunate children? What are you doing for them? What can you and your class do for them?

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.—Cowper.

What are all our histories but God manifesting himself, that he hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that he had not planted?—Oliver Cromwell.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. II. A Prince in Hiding and How he Came to the Throne of Judah.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do the Gospels tell us about the resurrection itself? 2. Read the account in Mark 16.14-18 and Luke 24.36-43. 3. Why were the disciples actuated by fear of the Jews? 4. When had Jesus promised the disciples the authority conferred in verse 23? (Mt. 16.19; 18.18). 5. What do the words mean? 6. What do we know about Thomas? (Subject Index of Bible). 7. What testimony did Thomas refuse to accept? 8. What is the meaning of Jesus's words in verse 29? 9. What do verses 30 and 31 indicate? 10. What was the Easter prayer of Paul, in Phil. 3.10?

EASTER LESSON

Golden Text

The Lord is risen indeed. Luke 24.34

LESSON John 20.19-31 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 15

JOHN 20.19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 20 And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: 23 whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach *hither* thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

30 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES, verses 19-23. After appearing to individual disciples throughout the day of the resurrection, Jesus suddenly appeared at evening in the midst of the disciples and others (Lk. 24.33) as they were assembled in a room in Jerusalem. They had closed the door *for fear of the Jews,* and they were terrified (Lk. 24), thinking they were gazing at a spirit. *Peace be unto you* were Jesus's words of greeting, and then to reassure them and convince them of his identity, *he showed unto them his hands* through which the nails had been driven to fasten him to the cross, and *his side,* which the soldier's spear had pierced. His Spirit was still clothed with the body that was his before his death, but it was a body no longer subject to ordinary laws, as evinced by his entering the room when the doors were shut. The conviction that he was indeed the Lord filled the disciples with joy. Again he said, *Peace be unto you.* This may have been a repetition of his greeting, or it may have been that after some unrecorded words he spoke this as a farewell when about to leave them. And then he bade them continue his work. *As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you,* were his words, and then came the bestowment of power to carry out his commission—*he breathed on them,* and exhorted them to *receive the Holy Spirit.* The Greek word πνευμα, pneuma, translated *Spirit* means literally *breath;* compare Luke 24.49. "The great charter which followed the gift—the power of forgiving or retaining sin—must be understood in consonance with the preceding commission and endowment. Christians are "sent" to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Destroyer of sin. The sins of those who receive the message are remitted, and those of its rejectors are bound more tightly on them. The messengers, therefore, do forgive and

retain by the preaching of the Word, and they have the right to tell a man that his sins are forgiven when they hear him profess his faith in the Great Remitter. We have here to do with no mysterious priestly power of absolution, but with the blessed or awful consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the offer of salvation in Jesus" (Maclaren).

II. THOMAS DOUBTS THEIR REPORT, verses 24,25. Thomas, gloomy and despondent, had been absent from this meeting. When the others told him the glad news he would not believe their testimony. They might have been deceived. He will believe nothing but the testimony of his own senses. Nothing short of putting his own finger into the print of the nails in the hands and into the pierced side of the risen Lord could convince him of the resurrection, he declared.

III. JESUS APPEARS AGAIN AND THOMAS BELIEVES, verses 26-29. A week later the disciples were assembled at the same place, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut as before, and again Jesus appeared in their midst and said, *Peace be unto you.* Turning to Thomas, Jesus bade him touch his hands and side, thus telling Thomas that he was aware of the latter's doubt. *Be not faithless, but believing.* The Greek word ἄπιστος, apistos, translated *faithless* means without faith, without belief. Whether or not Thomas used the privilege offered him, he at once exclaimed, *My Lord and my God.* His physical sight convinced him of the identity of his risen Lord, and his spiritual sight grasped the truth of his Lord's divinity. *Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* The evidence of soul is higher than the evidence of sense. See page 152.

IV. JOHN'S TESTIMONY, verses 30,31. The acknowledgment of Thomas was the climax of the faith in Jesus whose portrayal has been the great theme of John's Gospel. Much of Christ's life he has not recorded, John adds in closing (for the next chapter seems to be an appendix), but what he has recorded has been written for the purpose of proving *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,* and that those who believe *may have life in his name.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He breathed on them, verse 22. The impartation of vital energy and of spiritual power by the breath is a belief always very widely held throughout the East. The dervish mystics at the present day blow upon their neophytes during the ceremony of initiation into the mysteries of their order. They believe that the spirit of their venerable master is thus imparted to those who receive his precepts and promise obedience to his commands. Also, in their prayers over the sick, the patient is at certain intervals ceremoniously breathed upon, in order, as they say, that the vital energy or spiritual power of the operator may be thus imparted to the sufferer. The origin of this oriental custom is lost.

If the question be asked whether this act of the Master in breathing upon his disciples had any connection with this existing custom, it may be remarked that our Lord frequently in his miracles made use of human figures of speech, and so in this act he may naturally have used this method as being impressively solemn and readily understood. It was nothing new nor strange to the disciples, and excited in them no feeling of surprise.—Albert L. Long, in S. S. Times.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Risen Lord. Of the resurrection itself we have no account. Matthew is the only Evangelist who speaks of the event and he does so vaguely, not stating that any one saw it. The other Evangelists begin with the fact that the stone was found rolled away.

There are eleven appearances of Jesus during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension recorded, nine of them in the Gospels. He did not resume the close intimacy which had existed between himself and his disciples. His visits were occasional, sudden and mysterious. Dr. Hanson comments upon the long intervals of silence that were broken by sudden proofs of affectionate solicitude and the singular combination of aloofness and nearness, and says that they served pre-eminently the purpose of accustoming the disciples to think of him as a Spiritual Presence, removed from them and yet not unmindful of them, a Living Friend whose mode of working was changed, but whose heart was the same.

On both occasions recorded in our twentieth chapter of John, the place of meeting was some house in Jerusalem.

The Easter Date. Easter never comes before March twenty-second, nor after April twenty-fifth. Each year we tell by the moon when it will be. The method was fixed in the fourth century (325), and it has been followed ever since. First we find when the full moon occurs, after or on the Vernal Equinox, the twenty-first of March. The Sunday after that full moon is Easter. If the full-moon-day is itself Sunday, Easter is the next Sunday. Thus it happens that Easter comes this year three weeks later than last year.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Beginning the Lesson. "The highway to earnest belief is earnest doubting. A question mark is simply evidence that a man is beginning to think." Thus one of our great thinkers writes. And another speaks in the same vein: "Bygone doubts are available for the furtherance of faith; for the perturbations of faith are converted into confirmations, just as the perturbations in the planetary motions, at first supposed to throw doubt on Newton's theory of gravitation, were converted by more searching inquiry into the strongest proof of its truth."

The faith of the world has been strengthened by the doubt of Thomas. His very character gives force to his final satisfied doubt and testimony. Peter and John testified to their Risen Savior, but Peter was impulsive and quick to jump at conclusions, and John was ruled by his love. Thomas was brave and honest and earnest, but he was also cautious and suspicious and despondent. He had lost all hope. He would trust no one's testimony. He would believe only when he himself saw and felt and heard. Only one proof should be conclusive to him, and that his own. How did the doubting Thomas become the convinced disciple? Text Explained.

Much Grief Had Made Thomas a Doubter. If you want to find the true analogy to this despair of Thomas, visit some home where "in the shadow of a great affliction, a soul sits dumb." Sorrow has the power for a time of separating men from God, of making faith falter, of bringing the horror of a great darkness into their sky. I have seen others in the very same plight as Thomas—unable to believe, unable to realize, that Jesus was alive. I have received letters such as Thomas might have written on any one of the ten days after the Passion. "I can see no gleam of light ,and have lost my hold on God," writes one out of the midst of a crushing grief. And that was exactly the case with Thomas. "Much learning hath made thee mad," said Sextus to Paul. And much grief had made Thomas a doubter, had made him lose his hold on God.—Dr. J. D. Jones, in The Glorious Company of the Apostles.

They that Have not Seen, and Yet Have Believed. Men were lighted as torches in Nero's garden, and women flung to the wild beasts of the amphitheatre; and for what? For a system, for a cause, for a church? They died for him "Whom having not seen ye love," and the name of the Crucified was the last word that trembled on their dying lips. "Men," says Lecky, "seemed indeed to be in love with death. Believing they were the wheat of God, they panted for the day when they should be ground by the teeth of wild beasts into the pure bread of Christ." Love of life and love of kin, fear of pain and fear of death, were powerless before this talisman "For My sake." This sublime passion did not die with the sacrifice of the martyrs, a mere hysteric of religion, for it has continued unto this day the hidden spring of all sacrifice and beauty in the Christian life.—John Watson, in The Expositor.

Every Easter is a Challenge. In the dark hour which at some time must come to us all, when we stand in the presence of that Silence, like which there is no other, when lips that have talked with us so courageously are dumb and eyes that have looked with fortitude upon a life of pain are closed, when ears are for the first time deaf to a cry of need, the heart finds it easy to say, "This is the end."

In that moment the fact that all peoples of all degrees of civilization have believed in and prepared for another life after this has closed, does not warm nor cheer the heart. The fact that science and philosophy seem to point to the indestructibility of life does not bring solace. Even man's inborn longing for

more of life does not satisfy. Real comfort, the power to triumph over the pain of separation, the courage to take up all the little threads of life again without bitterness or doubt, the ability to forget personal grief in the presence of others' joys—these things come only to those who have known as a Friend, real and dear, the Man who himself lay quietly a prisoner in a tomb, until the third day, when he arose and came back again through the sunshine, birds and flowers to his grief-stricken people, to say, "Because I live, ye shall live also." *Know* what you have hoped, be *assured* of that for which you have longed, he seemed to say as he lingered with the world to which he gave himself.

If one who has never known the Great Victor save as a name, who has had no experience with him save in the prayers and hymns of formal worship, is plunged into the darkness of great sorrow, he will find it hard to realize his presence and support. Great peace and confidence come only to those who in pleasant ways and days of sunshine have become acquainted with Christ. So every Easter is a challenge, and all the music and joy of the celebration of the Risen Christ an opportunity to draw near and learn to know in deeper ways all that he has to give, that when one stands in the valley of the Shadow he may have a warm sense of companionship and a deep consciousness of the touch of the hand of a loved and trusted Friend.

May you who read the words and catch the deeper significance of this Easter message, with a more earnest determination than ever before resolve to get more truly acquainted with him whose day of victory it is, that amid all life has or shall have of sorrow and trial there may be for you—*peace,* yes, and, impossible as it may seem, even *joy*—God-given joy.—Margaret Slattery.

That I May Know Him, and the Power of His Resurrection. Paul was a man who was not satisfied to know a truth unless he also knew its power; unless, that is, he felt its influence upon himself. For there are different sorts of knowledge. Something happens and I hear of it. That is the slightest sort of knowledge. The mind simply receives and registers the incident. But let me find that that something has a relation to me—that it must influence my action and change my life; let me feel this deeply, and then I know the power of the fact. It is not the mind alone, it is the whole man, who knows it. It is one thing to stand on the shore and see the great waves and say, "There is a storm"; and it is a very different thing to be out in the midst of those waves, tossed every way by them, fighting for your life. On the shore you know of them; in their midst you know them, you know their power.

We celebrate on Easter Day the rising of our Savior from the tomb. And we go about with one another, heart saying to heart everywhere, "Christ is risen." And what makes that such a glad greeting is the assurance that is hidden in under it and is heard up through it: "We too shall rise." It is the assurance of our immortality bound up with Christ's, the certainty that because he rose we shall rise also, that makes the resurrection such a message of gladness to us all.

But is this all? Is this simple assurance of continued existence, that we are to rise from the dead and go on in some future state of existence—is this what Paul means by "the power of the resurrection"? It seems certainly evident enough that Paul meant more than this—that it was some great, powerful change to be worked in and on him himself. On him—not merely on things about him. It was not simply that by Christ's death and resurrection the tyranny of the old law of decay had been broken, so that instead of living seventy years his life was to stretch out into eternity and never to end. It was evidently that the quality of the life itself was to be changed, that he was to be something new and different, and not that he was just to be the same old thing a little or a good deal longer, when he should know the power of the resurrection. This is what he prayed for.

The power of the future resurrection is all along a power first of present regeneration. The things that God promises he will give us there he first does give us here, and so fits us to receive them in their completer giving. The new life which is held before us is first wrought out by the new birth creating the new man within us. In this view, how very slight a thing is death! How very easy it becomes for us to understand the Bible story that Christ, by his death and resurrection, killed death and took away its victory and sting! If the new spirit is formed in men here, if you and I may have eternal life abiding in us, clogged, hampered, and blinded, indeed, by the constraints of the poor body that we live in, and yet genuine and vital even here, and if death be nothing but the

breaking down of the body to let the spirit free, then how clear it is! The word of summons comes and the soul leaps to answer it. The eternal life in us answers to the eternal life beyond the grave, recognizes it, flees to its own. There is no violence of transfer. It is a continuation of the one same life. The grave is only the moat around the inner castle of the King, across which they who have long been his loving and loyal retainers on the farther side enter in, sure of a welcome to the heart of his hospitality.

The great Easter truth is, not that we are to live newly after death—that is not the great thing—but that we are to be new here and now by the power of the resurrection; not so much that we are to live forever as that we are to, and may, live nobly now because we are to live forever.—Condensed from Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

What Power Has the Resurrection for You? The resurrection of Christ proves that the cross was not a calamity which he could not avoid, but a cup which he willingly drained; it reveals him as the Son of God; it assures us that he is not now merely a memory but a Living Presence; it brings life and immortality to light; it comforts us with the faith that death is not the end of the soul but the gateway through which the soul passes into its larger life.

Ask yourself the question which Browning asks in Christmas Eve and Easter Day:

> One thing
> Remained, however—one that tasked
> My soul to answer; and I asked
> Fairly and frankly, what might be
> That History, that Faith, to me?

Has your faith in the Risen Lord affected your life? Has your belief that because he lives you will live also, borne fruit in the kind of life you are now living? Or are you living as though there were no connection between this present life and the life to come, as though you had no certainty that your character here determines your destiny hereafter?

For Discussion. What does Christ mean by his "Beatitude to all generations"? He means that he who has not seen and yet has believed rests his faith on higher evidence than he who believes because he has seen. John, the beloved disciple, looked into the empty tomb and believed Christ's resurrection. He needed no other evidence, for his knowledge of his Lord's life and his experience of his Lord's power made the resurrection easily believable. "There is an inward state of heart which makes truth credible the moment it is stated. To believe, not because we have learned and can prove, but because there is something in us, even God's own Spirit, which makes us feel light as light and truth as truth—that is the blessed faith."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How do the viewpoints of the writers of Kings and Chronicles differ? 2. When were the Books of Chronicles written? 3. What stands on the credit side of Uzziah's record? 4. On the other side? 5. What verse is the key to Uzziah's action in the temple? 6. How did Solomon stand prosperity and power? 7. Joash? 8. What does Prov. 29.23 say about pride? 9. Which is more perilous to the soul, adversity or prosperity? 10. What was the principle involved in Uzziah's transgression? 11. What is presumption? 12. What is the difference between self-respect and pride? 13. How did Saul's stubborn wilfulness meet punishment?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHY WE OBSERVE EASTER DAY

Beginning the Lesson. In the Garden of Gethsemane, you remember, Jesus was arrested and led away for hasty trials before the Jewish and Roman authorities. What became of the disciples meanwhile? "They all forsook him and fled." It is now three days later, the evening of the first Easter Day. What has happened during these intervening days? The apostles are assembled in their usual place of meeting in Jerusalem: which two are absent? They are listening eagerly to marvelous accounts. What has Mary Magdalene told them? What have Peter and John seen? Cleopas and another disciple have been joined by Jesus as they were walking to Emmaus. No wonder the disciples were gath-

ered together to talk things over! No wonder, too, that the doors were fastened, for the Jews who had crucified Christ must have heard the stories about his resurrection, and would have mobbed the disciples could they have been reached. Imagine the feelings of amazement and doubt, and hope and joy and awe that filled all their hearts as they listened to the wonderful news. And then Jesus himself appeared suddenly, without the opening of the fast locked doors! What were his first words? What commission did he give them? They were to carry on his work. They were sent by him to proclaim forgiveness of sins—what joy unspeakable was theirs!

Thomas was a brave, loyal disciple. "Let us go with him that we may die with him," he had said (Jn. 11) when Jesus spoke of going to Judea again. He was not at this first Easter meeting. When he was told about it he would not believe. What test did he say the Risen Lord must meet before he would believe it was really he? When did Jesus offer to meet the test? What confession of the Divinity and Lordship of Jesus did Thomas then gladly utter?

The Easter Victory. News of Wellington's victory at Waterloo was brought to England by sailing ship to the south coast, and by semaphore was wigwagged overland toward London. In due course the semaphore on the roof of Winchester Cathedral began to spell the message off: W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N—d-e-f-e-a-t-e-d—and then the fog closed in, the semaphore no longer could be seen, and the sad news of the incomplete message went on towards London, plunging the country into gloom—"Wellington defeated!" But, when the fog broke at last, the semaphore upon the top of Winchester Cathedral was still at work—W-e-l-l-i-n-g-t-o-n—d-e-f-e-a-t-e-d—t-h-e—e-n-e-m-y—and, all the more glorious for the preceding gloom, the wonderful news sped across the land and lifted up the spirits of the people into grateful joy—"Wellington defeated the enemy!"

So was the dreadful gloom of Calvary dispelled by the glorious victory of Easter Day! So what had seemed defeat was changed to triumph! And when Christ shall have come to his own in the hearts of men, the prophecy of that glad Easter Day shall be fulfilled.—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.

A Red-Letter Day. A Red-Letter Day at the beginning of spring is an absolute moral necessity. The name of the season is just another word for Easter Day. For what is "spring" but the lively symbolic description of the special event of Easter and of all the resurrections that follow in its train? Easter spreads its tonic message throughout the season that it crowns. Just as the keynote of Easter is the happy assurance that life is lord of death, so the season of spring rushes in with a challenge of vitality and tells us all to be physically and morally on our marks, to set and to go! Shall we not then catch the spirit of this season, so vital and so full of hope? Shall we not learn the living message of this day, the quintessence of springtime, and win from Easter just that tremor of new life which every bird and every bud is showing? Else how tragic for us to walk head downward, unresponsive, while the very beasts that perish seem in their lowly measure to answer the Easter call.

What then does Easter Day mean? Boys and girls of Ohio and Georgia and Connecticut, and of all the forty-five other states that spangle our banner,—so far away from that empty Judean tomb, yet so near to him who broke its seal,—what will Easter, the heart of springtime, mean to you, deep down in your heart, this very Easter Day?

The first message of Easter is the *vitality of Truth.* Truth cannot be quelled or killed. It is independent of the human thinker. We cannot create nor destroy the Truth. It *is.* It transcends time and creation. Before Abraham was, Truth is. Easter, visibly showing that positive life conquers negative death, proclaims the basic creed that Truth has been, is and ever will be so. Am I getting beyond you—you, whose brows are knitted as you face the old world, the world that is ever new? Am I juggling with words? Explain it this way to yourself: In the theatre the scenic artist employs distance to complete his illusion. You must not go too near. You must beware of familiarity! That lively landscape is just painted canvas and netting. That mellow distance rests on nothing but dusty lumber. With Truth it is all the other way. The nearer you get, the better. Come and see, taste and see, handle and see—these are Truth's invitations. Before even we learn the creed of our religion let us grasp the creed on which all creeds repose—that you cannot get behind Truth nor will it ever disappoint you. The nearer the fairer; the nearer the clearer;

the nearer the dearer. The trustworthiness of Truth is the creed behind all creeds. That is the first trumpet call of Easter.

"It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so."

Again, our Easter disciples will quickly discern a certain glistening purity in the season, urging them toward *moral renovation*. Consider the Easter lily and be ennobled. I defy you to pluck that saffron crocus in the garden and not feel the chaste charm of springtime. Can you stand on the margin of the woodland, alive to the awakening of spring, and not experience an ecstasy, a standing out from yourself, filled with long, long thoughts of destiny and daring that you would be abashed to confess? Yes, Easter puts spring into the conscience. A throbbing desire for whatsoever things are true and of good report fills these dingy hearts of ours. For, after all, they are dingy. Perhaps it is owing to our very devotion to routine and duty that somehow we rub the glistening sheen from human life. It ought to be such fun, and yet what a succession of chores we make of it! Then comes Easter, with its central conquering Figure, resplendent in the garden, putting to shame our dingy dutifulness as well as our shoddy second-rateness. All of us, the good and the indifferent, need this Easter tonic of the new start, the new method, the new view. To the good Easter says: "Cheer up, love God and do as you please." And to the rest of us who are discontented with our winter life Easter calls: "Awake! Look forward, and not back! Doff the old ways, don the shining armor of the new day." The central moral message of Easter, I am sure, is this: Be not dingy and dowdy in your dutifulness, but live with a smile and a cheer; or, as an ancient seer expressed it, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."

This putting on of shining moral armor, this starting out anew, suggests a third message of Easter to the modern girl and boy. It is the message of the *necessity of newness*. Now, some people interpret Easter newness as simply newness of clothes. There is a certain moral value in new clothes. They encourage self-respect. And sometimes we can change our mind when we change our clothes. Thus far, then, changes of raiment serve a useful turn. The boy who wears a bright new tie or the girl pleased with her nice new hat on Easter morning is behaving naturally. Neatness is laudable. Trigness is a little compliment that we pay society. But listen to this, the dictum of a keen observer, the head of a large department store: "Easter is a distinctly selfish period. At that time nearly everyone who enters my store is bent on some purchase for his or her personal use. On the other hand, at Christmas all is changed. Every purchaser is pretty certain to have in view one or two gifts that he can make." That is our own experience. We remember the jolly crowds of jostling, bundle-laden Christmas shoppers, their mystery and humor. We have seen, too, the tense acquisitive faces of the Easter purchasers.

Easter a selfish season! How comes it so? If we give presents to friends and the needy at Christmas time because of the Big Present once lovingly given to the world, shall we celebrate Easter, the feast when the Gift was made ours forever, by merely decorating ourselves and making presents to ourselves? For repentance we are enjoined to rend our heart and not our garment. For grateful praise, not new clothing but renewed character will be the proper medium. Try not to let the innocent symbolism of a bit of finery degenerate into the selfish slavery of clothes. It is wide of the mark of the season's message. Easter withers in the oppressive vacuum of selfishness. But the sunny freshness of altruism makes it blossom with meaning.

Easter is the heart of springtime. Let it prove the gate for us into a fresher and freer realm. Believe more fundamentally, live more brightly, share more readily. The beauty and the lilt of spring are divine suggestions to us children of men to rise from our dead selves to higher things. Behold and listen! With untutored praise the birds and the flowers about us seem to celebrate our Easter Day. They offer all their gayety and all their gladness. Shall our springtime spirit be less fresh and less complete than theirs?—Samuel S. Drury in The Youth's Companion.

The Greatest Festival of the Christian Church. Origen, an early father of the church, says finely that the Christian who dwells, as he ought, on the love and sacrifice of Christ, keeps every day his Easter and his pentecostal feast.

But there is virtue, too, in coming together and publicly declaring to the heedless and preoccupied world the faith which is at the foundation of all religious life. That is why Easter, which proclaims the divine, the immortal in man, is the greatest festival of the Christian Church.—The Youth's Companion.

A Beautiful Easter Story. The trees were still bare, and the grass brown and sere in the northern city; but the sky was blue and cloudless, and the air warm and soft. On a bench under one of the leafless trees in the Park sat an old man, gray-haired and poorly clad. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and he was thinking of many sorrowful things. Suddenly he heard a little, clear voice saying, "Didn't they give you any flowers?"

He looked up and saw a wee girl standing before him, with her hands full of flowers. She had a round, rosy face and round, blue eyes, and a little round rose-bud of a mouth; and she was looking at him very seriously indeed.

"Didn't they give you any flowers?" she repeated. "No, dear," said the old man gently; "nobody gave me any flowers. Where did you get your pretty posies?"

"In church, of course," said the child. "The minister gave us all flowers. You shall have some of mine," and she took some sprays of lilies of the valley and a red rose and laid them in the old man's withered hand. "Doesn't that make you glad?" she asked anxiously. "The minister said everybody must be glad today."

"Why must everybody be glad, my little angel?" asked the old man sadly. "Because Christ the Lord is risen," said the child. "Didn't you know? Don't you know that this is Easter Day?"

The old man smiled and raised the flowers to his lips and kissed them. "I have been ill, my little angel," he said, "but you have made me almost well again, and I *will* be glad! Christ the Lord is risen indeed."

"Hallelujah!" cried the child, eagerly. "Hallelujah!" echoed the old man, reverently. "Hallelujah!" sang the blue bird in the leafless tree. "Hallelujah!" said the whole wide world.—Laura E. Richard, in Five Minute Stories.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

When up the east the glory swept,
And from the grave the Lord Christ sprang,
Dead hope, that like the sluggard slept,
Leaped from the earth! The blue heavens rang
With exaltation loud and long!
Great expectation from the dead

Awoke, and, with triumphant song,
The radiant way from Calvary led.

Christ's Easter hath this message sent:
"Life's quiver is with arrows filled;
For endless years the bow is bent,
And life with endless hope is thrilled."—Bishop William A. Quayle.

Easter is Easter, not because Jesus rose long ago, but because Jesus still lives, and because there are among us those who *know* that he lives.—The Youth's Companion.

O chime of sweet St. Charity,
Peal soon that Easter morn
When Christ for all shall risen be,
And in all hearts new-born.—Lowell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How does the purpose of the Books of Chronicles differ from that of the Books of Kings? 2. Who was Uzziah's good counsellor and what were some of his good deeds? 3. What is the meaning of the expression in verse 16, "his heart was lifted up"? 4. What turned Uzziah's head? 5. What does our Golden Text mean? 6. How did Goliath's pride in his prowess lead to his downfall? 7. What was the law recorded in Num. 18.7 in regard to the burning of incense? 8. What was the law in regard to the abode of a leper? (Lev. 13.46). 9. What is the best cure for pride? 10. Read Longfellow's Sicilian Tale, in Tales of a Wayside Inn.

UZZIAH'S PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT

Golden Text

Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16.18

LESSON 2 Chronicles 26.1-21 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 16.18-25

REFERENCE MATERIAL Numbers 12.1-15; Deuteronomy 8.11-14; 2 Kings 5.20-27; 2 Chronicles 25; Jeremiah 9.23,24; Daniel 4.28-33; Matthew 23.8-12; James 4.6; Revelation 3.17-19

2 CHRONICLES 26.3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jechiliah, of Jerusalem. 4 And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5 And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God: and as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements, wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: 18 and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou has trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. UZZIAH'S PIETY AND PROSPERITY, verses 1-5. Uzziah succeeded his father, Amaziah, upon the throne of Judah when sixteen years of age. *He reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem.* His father had been true to Jehovah during the greater part of his reign, and Uzziah followed in his father's steps. Under the helpful influence of Zechariah the priest, *who had understanding in the vision of God*, the young king *set himself to seek God*, and as long as he continued to do so, *God made him to prosper.*

II. UZZIAH'S MILITARY SUCCESSES, verses 6-8. Uzziah's father, Amaziah, had conquered the Edomite foes on the south, and Uzziah first attacked the Philistine foes on the west. He conquered them, capturing and dismantling their chief cities, Gath and Jabneh and Ashdod, and built new cities in their stead. He subdued also the Arabians, and made the Ammonites across the Jordan pay tribute. *And his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong.*

III. UZZIAH'S CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS, verses 9,10. The walls about Jerusalem Uzziah strengthened by erecting towers at the angles of the fortifications and by erecting upon the towers and walls (verse 15) engines for shooting *arrows and great stones.* Such engines for hurling stones were afterwards

called by the Romans *balistæ;* they could discharge stones weighing as much as three hundred pounds. Engines that discharged arrows—to a distance even of a quarter of a mile—were called by the Romans *catapultæ.* In the wild pasture land south and southeast of Judah were immense flocks and herds, for which Uzziah had cisterns hewed out of the rock to hold water, and for whose protection against Bedouin robbers he erected towers for watchmen. The hills were terraced for vineyards and the fields were cultivated.

IV. UZZIAH'S ARMY, verses 11-14. He had an immense army, and it was thoroughly equipped.

V. THE SOURCE OF UZZIAH'S PROSPERITY, verse 15. Uzziah was *marvellously helped, till he was strong,* powerful among the nations round about. "These records of Uzziah's activity are confirmed by the evidence of the prophets at the close of that monarch's reign. As we should expect, there is a background of agriculture and pasture to the pictures of the national life presented by Amos and Isaiah. But against that background rises, in a way novel in Israel's history, an extraordinary enterprise in building with an increase of all manner of wealth and luxury. But these imply a great development of trade; and of this and of the tempers it breeds the prophets give us direct evidence. Amos describes an excessive zeal in buying and selling. Hosea calls Northern Israel a very Canaan, or trader. Isaiah says "Judah is filled from the East, she strikes hands with the sons of strangers," and mentions ships of Tarshish and caravans. The sins of trade; the covetousness which oppresses the poor and threatens the old religious festivals, false weight and lying, are exposed and condemned. Whether Uzziah throughout his long reign remained under that subjection to Northern Israel which was confirmed by Amaziah's defeat at Bethshemesh, or gradually advanced to more equal relations with Jeroboam II, it is difficult to say. In either case the two kingdoms were at peace, and between them commanded the trade from Elath to the borders of Phœnicia and Damascus. So great a commerce was in the hands mainly of foreigners—Arabs according to Isaiah, and doubtless also Arameans. They must have brought into Judah many foreign products and inventions; also a familiarity with life and institutions in Assyria and Egypt" (G. A. Smith).

A Subject People Paying Tribute

VI. UZZIAH'S TRANSGRESSION, verses 16-18. *When he was strong, his heart was lifted up* with pride, *so that he did corruptly.* "How often this has happened. When men and nations are poor, and struggling against overwhelming difficulties, they seek the Lord; but when prosperity shines on their path, how apt they are to say, 'the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth,' Dt. 8.17" (Meyer). Uzziah *trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense.* The altar of incense stood in the Holy Place, separated only by a veil from the Holy of Holies, and it was lawful only for the priests to enter there, Num. 18.7. Recall the lesson taught by the story of Korah, Num. 16, and see the discussion of Uzziah's sin under the first Topic. *Azariah,* the high priest, and *eighty* other powerful priests followed and opposed the king. "It is not your right, O King, to offer incense," they told him—that was the rightful duty of the *priests the sons of Aaron* who had been *consecrated* for the task. *Go out of the sanctuary,* sternly commanded the priests, *for thou hast trespassed.*

VII. UZZIAH'S WRATH AND PUNISHMENT, verses 19-21. *Then Uzziah was wroth,* and what king would not be when thus ordered? "Uzziah's wrath was perfectly natural; few men have been so uniformly patient of reproof as not sometimes to have turned in anger upon those who warned them against sin." He had the censer in his hands and was proceeding to carry out his purpose of offering incense when *the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests.* Those of us who have seen the lepers sitting by the wayside

begging in Palestine, and even running after one's carriage and trying to thrust their stumps of hands within, have some appreciation of the horror of that moment in the temple. The priests *thrust* the king out quickly, for he was now "unclean," but he himself *hastened also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him.* In a similar manner Miriam, Num. 12.10, and Gehazi, 2 K. 5.27, were punished. Bishop Francis J. McConnell points out a suggestive symbolism in Uzziah's leprosy. For a number of years the European nations spoke of a certain ruler as "the sick man of the Orient." The sickness was an inner sickness—a disregard for justice, a contempt for the standards of civilization, a defiance of the laws of humanity in a stubborn self-willedness. The inner sickness made an outer weakness which imperiled the life of the realm. Uzziah was the sick man of Israel. He had leprosy in his heart—a leprosy of self-will, and it was the inner sickness which made him unfit to rule.

According to the law of Lev. 13.46, Uzziah the leper as long as he lived *dwelt in a separate house* while *Jotham his son* occupied the royal palace and governed as regent.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He hewed out many cisterns, verse 10. Cisterns abound throughout Palestine. They are not confined to the cities and villages, where they are often built of solid masonry, but are often seen in the most solitary part of the wilderness. These latter consist of a large tank more or less deep in the earth, built around with stone-work, the walls rising several feet above the ground and sometimes roofed. A door in one side of the structure leads down a flight of steps extending even to the bottom of the tank, so that by it the water is always accessible, however high or low it may be in the cistern.—Van Lennep.

Stones for slinging, verse 14. The sling was used in warfare by the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. Wilkinson, in his account of the ancient Egyptians, describes it: "The sling was a thong of leather, or string plaited; broad in the middle, and having a loop at one end, by which it was fixed upon and firmly held with the hand; the other extremity terminated in a lash, which escaped from the finger as the stone was thrown: and when used, the slinger whirled it two or three times over his head, to steady it and increase the impetus." The people most renowned for its use were the natives of the Balearic Islands, who considered the sling of so much importance that the principal care of a parent was to instruct a boy in its use, and he was not permitted to have his breakfast until he had dislodged it from a beam with the sling.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What king of Judah came to the throne when he was only seven years of age? Who made him king and kept him in the right path? When that man died, how did the king rule? Of what sin was Gehazi guilty, and how was he punished? What great man was a leper, and how did he show his pride? How was he cured?

Three Reigns in Judah. The reigns of three kings of Judah—Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah—covered a century. Joash, you remember, did right as long as the high priest Jehoiada lived to counsel him, but upon the latter's death Joash with his people departed from the worship of Jehovah. When Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, rebuked Joash, he was stoned to death. The Syrians conquered Joash's army, disease came upon him, and his own servants put an end to his life after a reign of forty years. He was succeeded by his son *Amaziah* who conquered the Edomites, but brought back their idols and worshipped them. Joash, king of Israel, defeated him, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and despoiled the temple of its treasures. A conspiracy was raised against him in his own army and he was assassinated. Then his son *Uzziah,* a lad of sixteen, became king. Uzziah reigned fifty-two years, and forty of these years were contemporaneous with the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel, 780-740 B. C. At the death of these two kings, each nation, as we know from the writings of the prophets, was at its height of prosperity and pride.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Uzziah added to the fortifications of Jerusalem by building and fortifying towers at *the corner gate,* probably in the northeast, at the *valley gate,* on the

south, leading into the Valley of Hinnom, and at the *turning of the wall,* perhaps the southeast corner of the temple area. Dr. George Adam Smith prefers the plural of the Septuagint, turnings of the wall, and says Uzziah built "gate towers and flanking towers at angles where the walls turned round the city or bent with the natural line of rock. Probably this was all that was required on the walls of Jerusalem, which for the most part were planted on the edge of deep ravines high above the reach of breaching engines. Uzziah's flanking towers fully served their purpose. Whereas before his reign the comparatively small forces of Northern Israel had made a long breach on the northern wall, the only breachable part of the defences, after his reign the engines of Assyria herself failed to effect an entrance."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

In all the passages of Scripture cited in the heading of this lesson, there are over twenty places where italicized words or phrases are found. Do your pupils know why these words are printed in italics? In practically all such cases the words, which are not in the original Hebrew but are inserted by the translators to make the text read smoothly, do not make any change in the sense. Ask your pupils in preparing this lesson to read all these passages, note the italicized interpolations, and investigate their value. You will thus accomplish three things: you will have the passages read; you will fix in their minds once for all the reason for such italics; and you will keep up their habit of definite lesson preparation.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE PERILS OF PROSPERITY

Beginning the Lesson. Which is harder to bear nobly, prosperity or adversity? What are some of the temptations of the prosperous? What are some of the temptations of the unprosperous? What is the difference in the kind of temptations which the two have to fight against? Was Carlyle right when he said that for one who can stand prosperity one hundred can stand adversity? Let us see how Uzziah stood his prosperity and then return to these questions.

Uzziah's First Mistake Was in not Being Able to Bear Prosperity. "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up." He became self-willed. He thought that he was a law unto himself. Like William Hohenzollern and many another potentate, he believed that "the king can do no wrong."

To quote the words of Bishop Francis J. McConnell in The Sunday School Journal: "Here was a mighty king, a successful warrior, a conqueror of Philistines and Arabians and Ammonites, a great industrial captain, a builder of towers, a hewer of cisterns, a dresser of vineyards, a skillful organizer of the resources of Jerusalem. We know enough of the spell which the power of a single great man can cast over the minds of the people to realize something of Uzziah's hold on Israel. Even in times like our own we know how a single powerful will can at least for the time sweep a whole people under its control. Of course the spell must be broken in the long run, but most people do not live in the long run, and when the spell is broken it is ordinarily broken by the heroism of a small group of men like the priests in the lesson. We do not know just how far Uzziah would have been supported by the popular sentiment of his day in an attempt to override the priests, but we do see that the heroism of the priests was very genuine. Some readers of the chapter may feel that the priests were standing on their dignity in rather an artificial manner, but *the danger to the institutions of Israel was real and imminent.*

"The great conflicts in human history have often arisen over matters in themselves trifling. It would not have been a financial embarrassment for the American colonists to pay all the taxes levied by the English Parliament. The few pence tax on stationery or on tea would not have exhausted many purses. When a principle was involved, however, the refusal to pay even a few pence became mighty for the setting on high of a new nation. It may be that Uzziah could have swung a censer as effectively as a priest. A few lessons in censer-swinging might have rendered him really very capable, and censer-swinging is not in itself a matter of any great consequence. But a principle was involved even in so simple a matter as this bit of ceremonial. Uzziah had become high

and lifted up. His heart was corrupt, not in the sense that he had given himself over to evil practices, but in the sense that he had become self-willed. Taking one step more toward usurpation may not in itself have been of any great moment. But when that one step carried Uzziah into the precincts of the priests the time had come for protest, and the priests protested. They knew how to stand on their rights.

"Of course when priests stand on their rights simply to preserve an artificial and technical contention they are not entitled to support. They are even to be resisted when they give themselves over to ecclesiastical arrogance. We cannot believe, however, that this narrative is dealing merely with artificialities. Uzziah's self-will showed that he lacked the first requisite of priestliness, and the heroic band that were withstanding him were fighting for a human and a divine interest. The mightiest king needs to learn to keep to his place."

A Parable about the Effect of the Sunshine of Prosperity. Wireless telegraphy, which is playing so great a part in the naval war, making communication possible between ships at a long distance from one another, and also between ship and shore, has one disadvantage of which few people are aware. It is interfered with, not by rough weather, but by bright sunshine! It is, indeed, one of the most remarkable things about the Hertzian waves, upon which wireless telegraphy is based, that while fogs, clouds, and mists have no effect in the direction of absorbing them, they are so peculiarly susceptible to sunshine that on a bright sunny day the distance to which a message can be sent is much less than the distance possible at night. At the Marconi stations the power required during the daytime is in some cases several times that necessary during the hours of darkness, and, as far as possible, long-distance messages are reserved for transmission after sunset. So some characters are spoiled by the sunshine of prosperity, though the storms of adversity would be powerless to affect them.—Unknown.

The Dark Valley of Prosperity. The great test of individual character is not struggle, but attainment; not failure, but success; not adversity, but prosperity. When nature wants to put a man through the third degree, she places near him his laurel wreaths of victory: she megaphones to him the world's plaudits of success, she parades stacks of newspaper clippings and magazine articles with his portraits; she clinks his money-bags in his ears, and she tells him confidentially of the world-changing power of his influence. She smiles on him kindly and murmurs, "Poor fellow, is he able to stand it?" Then she sends him for his test through the dark valley of prosperity.

It is called the dark valley of prosperity because it so often dims the vision of the finer realities of life. In the early stages, in the dimness, men cannot see their old friends as they pass. There comes a peculiarity of the extensor muscles which prevents their extending the hand to some one no longer necessary to them. They acquire a form of memory impairment which prevents their remembering past favors and debts of gratitude due to those who stood by them in their hours of need.

In the dark valley, their dearest hopes and their high ideals often slip away into the silence. For them are substituted avarice and ambition, dressed in a livery of gold, and one may near-sightedly mistake them for higher good.

Poverty, struggle, failure and adversity are not in themselves passports to saintship—though they have given moral strength and sweetness to thousands. They have their own hard, bitter temptations to meet face to face. Theirs is far from an easy fight—the daily hand-to-hand battle with fate. But their temptations are usually direct, bold, clearly defined, and their joys require so little. The tempting tests of prosperity come in subtle phases, gilded, perfumed, masked in deceptive guise.

If called upon to bear the burdens of the greater responsibility let us bear them bravely at our best and let nothing rob us of simplicity, sweetness, strength, sympathy and all that is sterling. The greatest men and women are ever the simplest.—Condensed from The Crown of Individuality, by Wm. George Jordan.

Uzziah's Second Mistake was in Getting out of his Proper Sphere. In a friend's family this little incident occurred. Rob, the father, was a lawyer who had gone to the war and returned with the rank of major. A week after his arrival home, two-year-old Rob Junior, who had been put to bed in the dark by his father's orders, began to scream. "Let him scream," said the father. "He'll learn that it does no good. I'm not going to have a coward for a son. Boys

don't scream with fright in the dark." After a few moments the father arose. "What are you going to do?" asked his wife. "I'm sorry," said Rob, "but I'm going to whip him." Then Mother Marjorie rose. "Rob Withers," said she, "are you crazy? Have a military title and a *Croix de Guerre* turned your head? I'll have you know I've spent the last three years of my life doing nothing but learning how to take care of a baby, and I know something about it, too, and no ignoramus like you is going to whip my child!"

Rob bent over Marjorie and asked, "Do you see anything white on my forehead, Marjorie?" "What do you mean?" returned Marjorie. "Oh, nothing," said Rob, "only I was afraid I might be showing marks of leprosy." What *did* Rob mean?

"Uzziah had great success in building towns and in training soldiers and in spreading terror in the hearts of his enemies," comments Bishop McConnell, "but he failed signally when he tried to interpret for himself the religious demands of his times. He thought that because his skill had lifted him up above all others in kingcraft and generalship, he was likewise entitled to supreme rule in morals and religion. The narrative before us emphasizes his mistake.

"We see even in our own day illustrations of the same mistake. Here is a man at work in a laboratory—a very king in the control of the mysterious force which we call electricity. He can with a gleaming thread turn night into day, and with a revolving cylinder he can catch and preserve the subtlest tones of the human voice. In a vast realm of nature mighty agents run to and fro at the behests of this king. But the king finally gets over into another realm, and declares that the deep needs of the human soul are merely mocked by all our aspirations for immortality, that there is really no such thing as a human soul with splendid dignities on its own account The king has made a mistake, and the priest has a right to speak out."

Find examples among your acquaintances and in the newspapers of people who because they know one thing give advice about, or try to take command in regard to, something not within their province. This will be easy. But watch yourself! (Report your findings next Sunday.)

For Discussion. 1. Is Ruskin right in his statement that "in general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes"? "He who is intoxicated with his own success is essentially a weak man," declares Dr. Hillis. Uzziah and King Canute.

2. *Usurpation of Authority.* Were Azariah and the fourscore priests in the right? "Are you my mother?" protested a small boy as he valiantly resisted an older sister who was pulling him along by the hand and insistently commanding, "You come right home!" May he have been in the right? In your home circle, in school, club, church, nation, there are continually arising disputes involving the question, "Are you my mother?" or, "It pertaineth not unto thee." And there are those who question, "What harm if it gets done?" "Yes, I ordered the printing done," acknowledges a club member, "though technically I had no business to do it, but I knew it would be all right." "It isn't the five dollar bill involved," sturdily maintains another; "it's the principle involved. If you are allowed to usurp this time, why not next time and always?" What about those during the War who were doubly jealous for "the constitutional rights" of every citizen when unlimited power was placed in the hands of the government?

3. *Presumptuous pride in Christian service.* There is no greater danger attaching to the life of Christian service than the danger of presumptuous pride. I mean the pride which says, "I can dispense with the Word of God"; which persists in living on a minimum of prayer and communion with God, and in yet going about the work of God, as of old; a pride which, like Uzziah's, seeks personal prominence in spiritual things.—Dr. J. Stuart Holden.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what year did Uzziah die? 2. Why did Uzziah's death seem a great calamity to Isaiah? 3. What words of this chapter did Jesus quote and for what purpose? (Mt. 13.14,15). 4. What is the meaning of the actions of the Seraphim, verse 2? 5. Why did Isaiah utter his exclamation of verse 5? 6. What words of Peter as he compared himself with the Lord, do Isaiah's words recall? (Lk. 5.8). 7. What is the meaning of the placing of the live coal on Isaiah's lips? 8. What was the first result of the vision? 9. Was that natural? 10. What was the secret of Isaiah's great career? 11. How did Paul's call to service come? 12. When Paul at Troas had his vision of a man from Macedonia summoning

him, what response did he make? 13. Mention other Bible characters who were especially commissioned for a great work. 14. Mention a few specially commissioned of modern times.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PRIDE AND ITS PUNISHMENT

Beginning the Lesson. King Robert of Sicily once heard the priests at church chanting:

He has put down the mighty from their seat
And has exalted them of low degree,

and he muttered scornfully,

'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!

Lulled by the monotonous chant, the impious king fell asleep. When he awoke it was night, and he was in the church alone. He cried and knocked till the sexton came and flung open the door. Clothed in rags, Robert of Sicily sprang out and rushed to the palace.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!

"Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?" the Angel King inquired. "I am the king, and I come to claim my own from an imposter who usurps my throne," proudly cried Robert. "Nay, not the king, but the king's jester," said the Angel, and Robert was obliged to wear the cap and bells and take his place in the retinue of the king, by courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn. Oft the new king would meet him and ask, "Art thou the king?" and he would fling the haughty answer back, "I am, I am the king."

Three years passed, and a change came over proud Robert. On Easter Sunday

He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord,
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward,

and when once more the Angel King repeated his question, "Art thou the king?" King Robert meekly answered:

Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!

The proud king was humbled. Through the open window they heard the monks chanting:

He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!

The Angel smiled. "I am an Angel, and thou art the king!" he said, and vanished. When the courtiers came they found King Robert kneeling upon the floor near the throne, absorbed in silent prayer.

You recognize in our story the Sicilian's Tale in Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn. It is only a legend, of course. Uzziah, King of Judah, like Robert of Sicily, thought that no power could push him from his throne, and like him he was humbled.

(If you assigned this poem last week, as suggested, let some member of your class tell it.)

Uzziah's Pride and Punishment. See The Text Explained.

Pride Goeth before Destruction. Haman, the captive Amalekite, in some way won the favor of King Ahasueras. He was an astute man, and he succeeded in gaining greater and greater power over the king until he made himself the power behind the throne. He could not bear prosperity, however, any better

than did Uzziah. His head was turned by success, his heart was so lifted up that he believed every one should bow down and do him reverence, as did all the king's servants. But one day Mordecai, a Jew, refused thus humbly to salute him; and in great wrath Haman planned the death of all the Jews in the kingdom. In this he overreached himself, and it came about that he was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. His story recalls Cowper's lines:

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.
The man who deems himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around in all that's done
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn, in school of tribulation,
The folly of his expectation.

A Peril. Scientists teach that it was an advantage to certain animals to increase in bulk up to a certain point, but, having reached that point, the increase of size became the cause of their extinction.The glorious train of the peacock was at first an advantage, but as its plumes increase in number and size they become dangerous to the bird, it flies with difficulty. The expansion of the wings in butterflies of certain families seems to have reached a maximum, any further development threatens the existence of the species.

Whatever truth there may be about the danger to animals through development in size, it is very clear that increase in power, riches, or popularity is fraught with temptation to poor human nature.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Hampering Pride. "I need a woman to sew," said Marie. "I know a splendid sewer," said Claire. "She is not a regular seamstress; she is really a lady. But she has had reverses, and she is willing to sew for a few families who will understand her situation." "Not for me," said Marie. "I don't want lady help. I want a person who knows her place. The last lady help I had was so anxious not to be mistaken for a working woman that she led in conversation all day long. And she conversed on high grade subjects. Now I was paying for housecleaning, and not for lectures on literature. Give me a seamstress who knows her place." Was Marie a snob? Was she unreasonable?

Where there was No Pride. Two ladies at Shanghai were discussing whether Mr. Hudson Taylor was ever tempted to be proud. Finally one said, "I will ask Mrs. Taylor." But Mrs. Taylor did not know. However, she offered to inquire of Mr. Taylor. So she said to her husband: "Dear, two ladies have been discussing whether you are ever tempted to be proud. Are you?" Mr. Taylor replied: "What about?" "Oh," Mrs. Taylor answered, "about the things you have done." That man of God was greatly surprised, and he replied in his beautifully simple way: "I never knew that I had done anything!" And Mr. Taylor was right—wholly right. He never had done anything. Nevertheless God, through Mr. Taylor, had done a great deal.—Henry W. Frost.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. If you want to realize your own importance, put your finger into a bowl of water, take it out, and look at the hole.—Robert Burdette.

Jesus Christ was the lowliest among the mighty and mightiest among the lowly.—Jean Paul Richter.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not have dominion over me.—Psalm.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. IV. The Life of Uzziah in four scenes: (1) As a Youth; (2) At the Height of his Power; (3) In the Temple; (4) His Thoughts in his Leper-House.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When did Uzziah die? (740 B. C.). 2. What does the word *twain* mean? 3. What significance had the actions mentioned in verse 2? 4. What does *holy* mean? 5. Commit to memory Reginald Heber's beautiful hymn beginning, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." 6. Why did Isaiah utter the words of verse 5? 7. How is his forgiveness expressed? 8. What was Moses's vision of Jehovah at Mount Sinai? (Ex. 34.6,7). 9. How did the boy Samuel hear a call to service, and what was his answer? 10. How do we have a summons to service? 11. What is your response when you see a duty clearly before you?

ISAIAH'S SUMMONS AND RESPONSE

Golden Text

Here am I; send me. Isaiah 6.8

LESSON Isaiah 6.1-13 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Genesis 12.1-4; Exodus 3.1 to 4.17; Joshua 1.1-9; Jeremiah 1.4-10; Ezekiel 2.1-7; Matthew 10.5-20; 28.18,19

ISAIAH 6.1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. 8 And I heard the voce of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE ESSENTIALS OF WORSHIP: (1) *REVERENCE,* verses 1-4. *In the year that King Uzziah died:* thus Isaiah the prophet begins his account of his vision. In the words of Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, this is more than a date: this is an experience! In that year *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.* "No man hath seen God at any time," says the Apostle John in the Prologue to his Gospel. Is it possible to see the Infinite? "We say God is infinite: that is, he is without limitations. In the nature of things that which has no limitations can be neither seen nor known. Others have spoken of seeing God. Moses on Mount Sinai saw his back as the glory swept by. Samuel and Elijah are declared to have heard his voice. The Savior says 'The pure in heart shall see God,' and Moses said that if a man were to see him he would die. These seem to be contradictions, and yet they are not. One class of passages refers to the spiritual sense, and the other to the physical. No one ever saw God, and yet Moses and Isaiah saw him, and Samuel and Elijah heard his voice. As mountains and oceans are seen, God has never been seen.

Isaiah had a vision—something like a dream—possibly really a dream—in which the Deity seemed present. It was so vivid that it marked an epoch in his life and teachings. The prophet with the eyes of his spirit saw God as never before. He was as sure of him as of friends in the flesh; he could no longer doubt that all men and nations were in the Divine hands. In that supernal light all things were made new" (Amory H. Bradford). The conception of Isaiah's vision is singularly pure and lofty. It is a worshipper's thoughts when he draws near to God. The vision is but the service in the temple transfigured. The prophet fell into a trance while beholding the service and musing on its meaning. Suddenly the house and service and the ministers became transfigured; the walls went apart, and the roof lifted itself up till it seemed the high dome of God's palace on high under which he stood, and the Lord the King sat upon his throne receiving the adoration of all holy beings" (A. B. Davidson).

And his train (or *skirts,* RVm) *filled the temple.*

"No face; only the sight
Of a sweeping garment vast and white
With a heaven that I could recognize" (Browning).

"The King was dead, but God was alive. Who shall say that it was not something of the same strength of faith that came to James A. Garfield, when, speaking to the discouraged multitude in New York after the assassination of Lincoln, he exclaimed, 'God reigns, and the government of Washington still stands!'" (McFarland).

Above the Lord *stood the seraphim.* Nowhere else are seraphim spoken of as angelic beings. The Hebrew words mean "the burning ones": compare Ezek. 1.13,14. "They are not angels," Phillips Brooks tells us; "they are rather the expressions of the forces of the universe waiting there beside the throne of God; they are titanic beings in whom is embodied everything of strength and obedience which anywhere in any of the worlds of God is doing his will." These majestic beings stood in the presence of the Divine Being and reverently covered their faces with a pair of wings, for they were neither able nor worthy to look upon his resplendent brightness; and humbly they covered their feet with another pair of wings, for in that sacred presence they were overwhelmed with the sense of their unworthiness; and eagerly and willingly they used the third pair of wings to fly, for they were winged for service. "We talk about God's incomprehensibleness as if it were a sad necessity; as if, if we could understand God through and through, it would be happier and better for us. The intimation of Isaiah's vision is something different from that. It is the glory of his seraphim that they stand in the presence of a God so great that they can never comprehend him. His brightness overwhelms them. They cover their faces with their wings, and their hearts are filled with reverence, which is the first of the conditions of complete human life which they represent" (Phillips Brooks).

Assyrian Winged Figure

And one cried unto another, and chanted, *Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts,* and the other responded (as in antiphonal song), *The whole earth is full of his glory. "Holy* means separate, austere, high, lifted above all human infirmity and all human sin. *Holy* means that before which the spirit bows in awe and utter reverence and complete self-abasement" (Selbie). Their "thunderous praise" shook *the foundations of the thresholds* of the temple, and it *was filled with smoke,* the symbol of the Divine presence. Could words express a grander conception of Jehovah? Could that conception be told with more majestic simplicity?

II. THE ESSENTIALS OF WORSHIP: (2) *HUMILITY,* verses 5-7. God's holiness and glory made Isaiah conscious of his own weakness, and he exclaimed, *Woe is me! for I am undone.* "What Isaiah actually felt was the shame, the distraction, the embarrassment, the blinding shock of a personal encounter with One whom he was utterly unfit to meet" (Smith). *Because I am a man of unclean lips.* So Peter exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Lk. 5.8, as he compared himself with the Master. Isaiah heard the seraphim praising Jehovah, and at once became conscious that his lips (his nature) were unfit to join in the song. *And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:* "Their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah," Isa. 3.8. And there was yet another reason for Isaiah's exclamation, *Woe is me!—for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.* "Who is able to stand before Jehovah, this holy God?" 1 S. 6.20; Ex. 33.20.

Fire is a symbol and an agent of purification, and with it Isaiah's lips were purged: one of the seraphim touched *his mouth with a live coal from off the altar, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thy sin is forgiven.* From rapture to abasement the seer had passed, and now he passed from abasement to a knowledge of forgiveness. "When you strip away the imagery, and get down to the bare, warm truth, this is what you find—a man whose sense of moral lack had prompted that open confession, cleansed in that high hour by the direct action of the Divine Spirit upon his soul" (Brown). "Instead of laying his guilt in the shape of some victim on the altar, Isaiah, with a keener sense of its inseparableness from himself, presents it to God upon his own lips. Instead of being satisfied with beholding the fire of God consume it on another body than

his own, at a distance from himself, he feels that fire visit the very threshold of his nature where he had gathered the guilt, and consume it there. It is a replica of the fifty-first Psalm: 'For thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it; thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' This my sacrifice, my sense of guilt gathered here upon my lips: my 'broken and contrite heart,' who feel myself undone before thee, 'Lord, thou wilt not despise.' Nearly eight centuries before there was accomplished upon Calvary that Divine Sacrifice for sin, which abrogated a rite of expiation, hitherto universally adopted by the conscience of humanity, we find a Jew, in the dispensation where such a rite was most religiously enforced, trembling under the conviction of sin, and upon a floor crowded with suggestions of physical sacrifice; yet the only sacrifice he offers is the pure spiritual one of confession. It is most notable. Look at it from a human point of view, and we can estimate Isaiah's immense spiritual originality; look at it from a Divine, and we cannot help perceiving a distinct foreshadow of what was to take place by the blood of Jesus under the new covenant" (Smith).

III. THE ESSENTIALS OF WORSHIP: (3) *SERVICE,* verse 8. Isaiah's sin being taken away, he is able to discern the voice of God himself. It is in the most beautiful accordance with what has already happened that he hears this, not as a command, but as a request, and answers not of compulsion, but of freedom. *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us?* "There is Divine work which tarries until the appointed soul arrives. We are exalted to be fellow laborers with God" (Jowett). *And I said, Here am I; send me.* "He did not say, 'Here are any number of fine people, send them. Here is a man who could perform the task better than I, send him.' He said what every man must say who means to stand right in the Day of Judgment, 'Here am I, send me.'" (Brown). The view of God gave Isaiah a view of self: the confession of sin brought a consciousness of salvation: the reception from God led to service for God.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I saw the Lord, verse 1. There are Moslem zealots who have journeyed to Mecca and gazed upon the places which to them are sacred, and then, lest their eyes which have seen the holy city should profane that vision by looking thereafter upon unhallowed scenes, they have knelt down before white-hot bricks and let their heat burn out all power of sight forever. "The last thing I saw on earth was the Holy City," they proudly proclaim; "since then I have not seen." Such a Moslem pilgrim sees his Holy City and then deliberately blinds himself and makes himself useless. An Isaiah sees the Holy God and strengthened by that vision volunteers for service.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How long did Uzziah reign? What did he accomplish for Judah? In what spirit did he enter the temple, and how did he come out? (Contrast with the spirit of Isaiah in the temple, and his coming out consecrated to the Divine service.)

Uzziah the King and Isaiah the Prophet. The chronicler closes his account of Uzziah's reign with these words: "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. So Uzziah slept with his fathers; and Jotham his son reigned in his stead." The Book of Isaiah begins with these words: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah." Then follow an account of the corruption in Judah and a prophecy of punishment. Chronologically, the Book of Isaiah should begin with our lesson, Chapter VI, Isaiah's Vision and Commission, which came to him "in the year that King Uzziah died"; and were his inauguration into his office of a prophet.

As we saw last week, King Uzziah had been a master of statecraft and diplomacy; he was successful in the arts of both war and peace; he had walled cities and big armies and much wealth. Uzziah had been Isaiah's patron, all the young prophet's hopes for his country were centered in the great king, and the latter's loss seemed to him irreparable. Although Isaiah must have been a young man

at this time, he saw the corruption in Judah (which we shall consider next Sunday), and also the distant war-clouds big with dread that were threatening the life of the nation, for Judah lay in the path of the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III, who was beginning to conquer the western world. Could Uzziah's son, who lacked his father's ability and energy, rule wisely in such a crisis? Isaiah may well have been tortured with fear, till in the quiet temple his grand vision came to him and his fears took flight, for he learned that whoever was the earthly ruler, Israel's real King was Jehovah. "He lost a hero, and he found the Lord. He feared because a great pillar had fallen, and he found the Pillar of the universe. He thought everything would topple into disaster, and lo, he felt the strength of the everlasting arms."

The Book of Isaiah. See the next lesson.

The Sixth Chapter of Isaiah. "The conception of his vision is singularly pure and lofty," to quote the words of Dr. A. B. Davidson. "It is a worshipper's thoughts when he draws near to God. The vision is but the service in the temple transfigured. The prophet fell into a trance while beholding the service and musing on its meaning. Suddenly the house and service and the ministers became transfigured; the walls went apart, and the roof lifted itself up till it seemed the high dome of God's palace on high under which he stood, and the Lord the King sat upon His throne receiving the adoration of all holy beings."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

In all these lessons, if you have had regard to the general principles of teaching, you have caused your pupils to observe facts, to draw conclusions, to formulate them, and to apply them as much as possible, to their own lives. But in this lesson they cannot observe what is wholly outside of their experience. Here, if ever, *exhortation* is justified. If in the last lessons you have withheld any personal pressure, so much the more effective will it be today. The great lesson here is that there is a vision to be seen; that looked at with open eyes it brings a great blessing. Your object in teaching this lesson should be to awaken in your pupils the aspiration and the intention to *see the vision and to get its values*. You cannot succeed in impressing this truth without much prayer and preparation.

Teach: (1) that life, even the most civilized, is mere grubbing unless illumined by visions. Stories of people with riches and opportunities who are bored to death. Pilgrim's Progress.

(2) The more of a grub you are, the less you like to look up. The closer your room is the more you "can't stand a draught!"

(3) Visions come to those who are able to see them. Visions recorded in the Bible. To become able, do God's will. Eyes and no eyes, in Evenings at Home.

(4) When you do look up, then you will be blessed by hearing a call to serve, and you may have the great joy of volunteering. In your daily life, are you a conscript or a volunteer?

(5) The glorious privilege of serving God is yours; accept the privilege and you will live. Pippa Passes.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SERVICE TO WHICH GOD CALLS US

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Peter Akers once denounced slavery and made a prediction—strange for that day—that the time would come when slavery would be overthrown. Among his hearers was a young man named Abraham Lincoln. As Lincoln walked home from church that morning he confided to a friend that during the sermon he had had a vivid vision of that coming time, and also a remarkable conviction that in some way he would in after years have an important share in bringing about this great consummation. Here was a vision and a prophecy. We study today a greater vision and prophecy of a greater prophet. Text Explained.

Earthly Kingdoms and Spiritual Kingdoms. About the time that this crisis came in the life of the young Jew, the city of Rome was founded. The obscure village grew to be a city, the city developed into a State, the Republic spread its power over the Italian Peninsula, then it launched out on a conquering career; it finally subdued the civilized world and came to be a great imperial

power. That empire, after centuries of sway and influence, crumbled to pieces and left its varied heritage to the life of mankind: new empires have risen and the world is called to face new problems. Isaiah's vision remains and the spiritual kingdom to which it belongs is beginning to be revealed in larger outline and richer fulness. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of God abideth forever." Distance of time does not destroy our interest in a scene which is a parable of the changeless life and part of the upward movement of God's kingdom.—W. G. Jordan, in Prophetic Ideas and Ideals.

What Isaiah's Call Involved. Isaiah knew what that vision involved. It meant that he had to go into the midst of Jerusalem and bear his witness, and become the best-hated man in Jerusalem; it meant that his voice was to be lifted up against the luxury and self-indulgence of his time. It meant that he had to go and be a speckled bird in the midst of his people and be accused of the lack of patriotism. And it meant that he had to go and do the hardest thing that, perhaps, any man has been called upon to do: to prophesy and prophesy, and see the people growing worse and worse while he prophesied; see them growing blinder, more deaf, harder of heart: and he said, "Here am I; send me." My plea is that in the midst of all that troubles us about our national life God is calling us by this very need to go and bear our witness.—Charles Brown.

How God Calls Us. There are some who delude themselves with the hope that Almighty God will take and thrust them into some field of service, that he will speak in their ear an audible word which will set their doubts at rest. But is that his way of dealing with men? He did not deal so with Isaiah. He did not say, "Isaiah, come hither; I summon thee." The cry is a general cry, thrown out, as it were, across the world: "Who will go?" and it is for the man who has seen the vision and felt the impulse to service rise in his heart, to say for himself, "Behold me, send me."—Professor John E. McFadyen.

Stirring Words to Young Men. One of the main functions of religion is to keep before us the ideal; and the young who see visions are a natural channel of its working. Despise not your youth in this its best aspect. Keep your visions: nurse them: correct them by the mind of Christ. As he knocks at the door of your heart, offering you not merely a state of blessedness, but a *career of service,* open to him willingly. He will inspire passion in you, and will regulate it; and will set you to your work in the world for him and for the brethren. He will give you a vocation which will fill your life, and will save it from gross temptations and redeem it from many evils. The heart that has seen the vision will not be satisfied with lower loves. The hand that has felt the touch of his finger will not move to evil ends. Bend to him, responsive to his love, eager for his great service; and even when you become old you will dream dreams of beauty and peace; and you, young men, will see visions of purity and joy, and noble life that will change the world. Let no man despise the youth which has in it such powers and potencies.—Dr. Hugh Black, in The Gift of Youth.

Why Horace Tracy Pitkin Made his Pledge of Service. When a student in Yale, Horace Tracy Pitkin became a Missionary Volunteer. The decision was made at Northfield. "'Why did I make it?' Simply because I could not see why I shouldn't. The question came, not 'Why purpose to go?' but 'Why not purpose to go?' The presumption is in favor of foreign missions. As I saw nothing that stood in the way of my accepting the challenge, I did accept it, believing that God had used my reasoning powers to that end." He resolved to equip himself spiritually and intellectually, and to go unless the way should be finally blocked.

As his seminary course drew to a close he applied to the American Board for an appointment. He said: "My study had shown me the true depth and glorious responsibilities of the missionary service, and I know perfectly that God wanted me to work for him in the uttermost parts of the earth. There has been no call from the cloud, but the facts of my life and the results of study inspired by and carried on under God have been a sure and certain call to his work in the waste places."—Condensed from Epoch Makers of Modern Missions, by Archibald McLean.

A Teacher's Summons and Response. One day I sat with a young woman under the pines at Northfield. After a while she said, "I have taken my class of girls very easily. Often I haven't really studied the lesson. Sometimes I've talked a part of the time about other things. Not one of them is a member of the church. I am going to give them up. You make the standard so high.

It is too hard." "Yes," I said, "it *is hard.* Have you asked to be let off?" "Oh, no," she said, "I shall not see my superintendent until October." "I did not mean the superintendent," I said, "I mean the One who taught his own class of twelve so patiently, against such great odds—and told us to *go* and to *teach.*" "Oh," she replied in a tone of surprise, "that is a strange way to put it. I never once thought of that." "Before you give up the class," I said, "you would better get an honorable discharge from headquarters." I reminded her of all her great advantages, her leisure, her ability, and then we talked of other things. On the last night of the conference she walked to the auditorium with me. "I did not get my discharge," she said softly. "I am going to the —— school two hours each week this winter and learn how really to teach. If God will help me, I'll make that class over."

Only he who sees the real Commissioner can find joy in the commission he has the honor to have entrusted to him—the greatest honor in the world, that of forming and reforming human character.—Condensed from an Article by Miss Margaret Slattery, in The Pilgrim Teacher.

For Discussion. 1. Our sense of sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, or else we lie. Where is the man who can stand up in the presence of those who know him and say, "Every deed that I have done was done in honor and integrity. Every word that has fallen from my lips has been spoken in truth and kindliness. Every desire which I have harbored in my soul has been one upon which the eye of my Maker might rest with approval." Can you say that?—Dr. Charles R. Brown.

2. Isaiah saw God. *Do men see him today?* Was he any nearer to Jerusalem than he is to London or New York? Did that old Hebrew possess faculties different from ours? Can we see and know God? What do we mean by seeing and knowing God? A spirit cannot be seen with physical eyes. We mean that we are so convinced of the reality of God that our thinking and living are determined by that conviction: so sure of him that we live as if we saw him by physical sight. Without trying to prove anything, observe that many of the wisest, purest, and least likely to be deceived of all time, have had this faith—a faith so firm that it has transformed and transfigured life, and been held in face of loss and death.—Condensed from Growing Revelation, by Amory H. Bradford.

3. How does one receive a call to be a prophet? How can he be sure of his call? In what sense can everyone be a prophet? How does one receive a call to be a minister of God? See Expositor's Bible, Isaiah, verses 4-8, under "The Call"; A. B. Davidson's Called of God: "The Call to the Ministry" in Sunday School Worker of December, 1920. How does one receive a call to a life of service? See The Meaning of Service, by Dr. Fordick.

4. Do we expect recruits from our Church School for the Christian professions—as ministers, missionaries, Christian Association secretaries, religious educators, welfare workers, deaconesses, etc.? Are there young people in our school capable of filling such positions? Have we discovered them? Can we make a wise investment of money and help those who cannot afford it, to prepare for such Christian service?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what other book of the Bible is our first selection found, with only minor changes in wording? (Micah 4.1-3). 2. How do you account for this duplication? 3. What is the meaning of "the latter days"? 4. What is the meaning of "the mountain of Jehovah's house"? 5. Explain Isa. 11.1-3. 6. 11.6-8. 7. What reference to Isa. 11 is made by Paul? (Rom. 15.12). 8. What is said in Isa. 9.5-7 about the Prince of Peace? 9. Do you think we have seen our last war? 10. Why, or why not? 11. What progress toward universal peace has been made since the Great War? 12. What in your opinion will hasten universal peace? 13. What can we do to promote peace?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

Beginning the Lesson. Did you ever hear a boy—or girl—tell about some happening and say that it was "in the winter that he broke his thumb," or, "the

day that he went skating on the pond"? This is the way in which many people date events, by some happening that was of importance to themselves. Mothers often say, "It was the year that John was born," or, "the summer that Kate was so ill." How does our lesson begin? In that far-away time also a striking event was used to date another event, and so the prophet Isaiah says that it was "in the year that king Uzziah died" that he had his great vision which taught him many things; the holiness of God, the sinfulness of himself and his people, and the service to which God called him. How did the vision teach him the holiness of God? Continue with Text Explained.

Every Christian Should Volunteer for Service. You know the story of the Scots Guards, how at the time of a British War in West Africa they were drawn up in line at Windsor and asked by their colonel who among them would volunteer for the Ashantee expedition. He explained the call, and then requested those who would respond to step one pace forward. Then he turned away for a moment, and when he looked again he saw them all in an unbroken line, just as they had been before. "What!" he exclaimed, "the Scots Guards and no volunteers?" "Sir," said another officer, "the whole line stepped forward."

So should it be with all Christians. The call that reached Isaiah comes to every one: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and the answer that Isaiah made should be the answer of every one: "Here am I; send me." A Christian must be a volunteer. "Go work in my vineyard today." The vineyard is large. It includes the home, the school, the church, the Sunday-school, the young people's societies, the Home Missionary and the Foreign Missionary societies, the village, the city, the country, the whole world. Where have you been sent? In what department are you working?

Your Response to the Call for Service. When one person says to another, "Send me," he asks that he may be a messenger. When a person says in prayer to God, "Send me," he asks God to use him as a messenger. It is of messengers I shall speak today—God's special messengers whom he picks out for special service here and there.

You will find it very interesting to make sometime a Bible study, with pencil and paper, of all the special messengers named in the Bible, and of what each was sent to do. For example, beginning with this text, you will find Isaiah to have been a special messenger. That is a wonderful story, where Isaiah saw the magnificent glory of God in the temple, and the many-winged angels crowding around him. And he says: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go!" You will find that Moses was a special messenger. God took him from the sheep that he was feeding and said: "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh. Certainly I will be with thee and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee." You will find that John the Baptist was a special messenger. God called him from his childhood and trained him for his work, saying: "Behold I send my messenger before Christ's face, to prepare the way before him."

I heartily wish that the boys and girls of this church, beside making a Bible study of the special messengers of the old days, would make all through these years of their boyhood and girlhood a study of the special messengers of modern times, by which I mean books of biography, the lives of the men and of the women who at the call of God have done brave and good work in special ways for him,—some as soldiers; some as philanthropists; some as physicians; some as statesmen; some as ministers; some as business men; and some, oh, so many—as the helpers of others in quiet home life and in beautiful, compassionate, unselfish city work. I hope you will grow to love books of biography and all books that record the intense, unsparing, high-minded devotion of the brave, consecrated hearts that God has picked out to be his special messengers; not always, by any means, because they had greater gifts than some others, but because they had given themselves so devotedly to his service, to do anything he asked them to do—to stand always ready, expectant, eager to be specially used, eager to cry, in the prospect of any unselfish toil, "Here am I; send me."

I would like to suggest to some of you to study that short but wonderful poem by Robert Browning, called "The Boy and the Angel," to see if you can find out the deep lesson it teaches about how the true special messenger must be truly and obediently willing to go or to stay just when and where God wants him to go or to stay.

I cannot help looking ahead, and trying to fancy where you will be, and what you will be doing as God's messengers twenty years hence. "Twenty years hence?" you say; "what a terribly long time!" Take a boy of fifteen. In twenty years he is thirty-five, and by that time it is pretty well established whether or not he has his commission for special service. As I look ahead now, over your twenty years to come, I cannot help believing that by that time many of the lives gathered here today will evidently be showing to the world that they are the special messengers of One who makes no mistake in sending out his own.

Your daily life will be your training. At home, at school, in work, in play, alone, with friends, in joy, in hardship, in health, in sickness, in your visits of consolation to the poor and suffering, in the place of prayer, in your time of Bible study, in the church of God, and at the communion table of him whose messenger you have asked to be, he who loves you, and who has chosen you to be his messenger, will be training you for your special life work.—Condensed from The Silver Cup, by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall.

Whom Shall I Send? "Who will go for me to the lower side of New York, or into the slums of other cities, or into the industrial centers of the Middle West, among the black folk in the South, to China and Japan and Africa, and the Islands of the Seas?"

From the Other Direction. An old legend tells of a monk whose great desire for purity made him turn away from men, and his longing for communion with God induced him to try to live as far above the earth and as near to the heavens as he might. He took up his abode at a lofty height in a great cathedral tower, and would not come down. Admiring friends supplied him with food, and night after night he looked up into the far-off blue with its glory of stars, and day after day saw birds wing their flight in the sunshine, and fleecy white clouds sail by. For years he prayed and watched, but the voice for which he listened did not come. Then one day it seemed to him he heard it, and eagerly he called: "Where art thou, Lord?" "Down here in the busy street amid the toilers," was the answer that came back to him, and he went down to take his place among his fellowmen and bear his share of the world's burdens.

The voice of the Lord is quite likely to come from unexpected quarters and call to some task which is not at all what we have chosen. We may be all ready to join in the worship of the great congregation and then find that our work is the care of a fretful invalid or the soothing of a little child. We may listen so insistently for a call to some great service that we do not hear whose voice speaks to us in the familiar tones of a troubled neighbor.—Editorial in The Westminster.

Where to Serve.

"Not mine to mount to courts where seraphs sing,
Or glad archangels soar on outstretched wing!"

says Dr. Edward Everett Hale, and then later adds:

"But lesser worlds a father's kindness know;
Be mine some simpler service here below—
To weep with those who weep, their joys to share,
Their pain to solace, or their burdens bear;
To serve some child of thine, and to serve thee,
Lo, here am I! To such work send thou me!"

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Meditation is the eye wherewith we see God.—St. Ambrose.

We see ourselves when we see God.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

The people who see great sights are the people who do great deeds.—Dr. Coyle.

God has a few of us to whom he whispers in the ear.—Browning.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. V. The Call of Isaiah to be a Prophet.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do our two selections from Isaiah have in common? 2. What does the figure of speech in 2.4 mean? 3. What did Jesus say about peacemakers? (Mt. 5.9). 4. Read Longfellow's poem, The Arsenal at Springfield, with its reminder that Christ's legacy to the world was "Peace." 5. What was the message about peace heard when the Prince of Peace was born? 6. What does war do? 7. What does peace do? 8. What has been done toward permanent peace since the World War? 9. What can we do to keep peace?

ISAIAH'S IDEAL FOR A WORLD AT STRIFE

Golden Text

Come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah. Isaiah 2.5

LESSON Isaiah 2.2-4; 11.1-9 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 46.1-11

REFERENCE MATERIAL Psalm 46; Micah 4.1-5; Matthew 5.9; Galatians 5.22,23; Philippians 4.8,9

ISAIAH 2.2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

11.1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; 4 but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. ZION THE WORLD'S RELIGIOUS CENTER, 2.1-3. And it shall come to pass in the latter days, so Isaiah begins his phophecy. The phrase "the latter days" as used by the prophets is equivalent to "Messianic times." "It is the far-off horizon of time, which, like the spatial horizon, always seems a fixed and eternal line, but as constantly shifts with the shifting of our standpoint or elevation. Every prophet has his own vision of 'the latter days'; seldom is that prospect the same. Determined by the circumstances of the seer, by the desires these prompt or only partially fulfill, it changes from age to age. The ideal is always shaped by the real, and in this vision of the eighth century there is no exception" (George Adam Smith). When that time comes, said the prophet Isaiah, *the mountain of Jehovah's house,* Mount Moriah, the hill on which the temple was built, *shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills.* "Interpret the words figuratively as meaning that the fame of Jehovah will become so great that it will eclipse that of other deities. The metaphor may be based upon an ancient belief that there was a mountain reaching from earth to heaven, on whose summit the gods dwelt" (Eiselen). *All nations will flow into it:* of their own accord heathen nations shall come to it as the spiritual capital of the world, there to learn to know and obey God's will.

II. THE REIGN OF UNIVERSAL PEACE, 2.4. God will *judge between the nations and will decide concerning many peoples:* his judgments will be accepted as final, wars therefore will be unnecessary, *nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more,* and the implements of warfare will be turned into implements of husbandry. The short, straight sword could easily be used for the cutting part of a plow, and the iron end of the spear for a pruning-hook.

Ancient Coin Commemorating Peace

"Put off, put off your mail, O kings,
And beat your brands to dust!
Your hands must learn a surer grasp,
Your hearts a better trust" (Ruskin).

"No energy is to be destroyed; it is all to be transfigured. The sword is to become a plowshare; the weapon of destruction an implement of culture. I saw a picture the other day which was intended to represent the re-enshrinement of peace. A cannon had dropped from its battered carriage and was lying in the meadow rusting away to ruin. A lamb was feeding at its very mouth, and round it on every side the flowers were growing. But really that is not a picture of the golden age. The cannon is not to rust; it is to be converted, its strength is to be transfigured. After the Franco-German War many of the cannon balls were re-made into church bells. That is the suggestion we seek in the golden age; all destructive forces are to be changed into helpful ministries. Tongues that speak nothing but malice are to be turned into instruments of wisdom. All men's gifts and powers and all material forces are to be used in the employment of the Kingdom of God (J. H. Jowett).

"The hope expressed is not yet fulfilled; in spirit and essence it will reach its fulfilment, according to the universal Christian belief, when the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Jesus comes to be the dynamic life and conduct everywhere" (Frederick Carl Eiselen).

III. THE MESSIAH AND HIS GOVERNMENT, 11.1-5. At the close of the tenth chapter of Isaiah the fall of Assyria is pictured as the felling of the cedars of Lebanon by the ax swung by Jehovah himself. The cedar once felled puts forth no new sprouts—the Assyrian power shall fall to rise no more, is the prophet's meaning. Now, in this succeeding chapter Isaiah likens the house of David to an oak which when cut down puts out a new growth. *Out of the stock of Jesse,* the father of David, *there shall come forth a shoot, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.* Upon this promised descendant of David the *Spirit of Jehovah shall rest,* he shall be divinely qualified for his great work (recall Christ's words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," Lk. 4.18), imbued with *wisdom and understanding,* "ripeness but also sharpness of mind," *counsel and might,* "moral decision and heroic energy," *knowledge and the fear of Jehovah,* "piety in its two forms of knowing the will of God and feeling the constraint to perform it." He shall be just and righteous in all the acts of his government, not judging by outward appearances nor by report; *after the sight of his eyes or the hearing of his ears* refers to the way kings judged. He shall be the defender of the poor and the meek; his bare words shall have power to kill. Righteousness and faithfulness *shall be his girdle,* "shall constantly compass and cleave to him, and shall be his strength, making him expeditious in his undertakings, as a man with his loins girt" (Matthew Henry). "Dean Plumptre has suggested that these verses may represent the program which Isaiah set before his pupil Hezekiah on his accession to the charge of a nation which his weak predecessor had suffered to lapse into such abuse of justice and laxity of morals. The Christian Church, however, has not confined the application of the passage to early kings and magistrates, but has seen its perfect fulfilment in the indwelling of Christ's human nature by the Holy Spirit" (George Adam Smith). *His delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah.* "For *delight* the margin (of the Bible) gives *scent* as the literal meaning, but the phrase may as well mean, 'He shall draw his breath in the fear of the Lord.' It is a most expressive definition of sinlessness—sinlessness which was the attribute of Christ alone" (George Adam Smith).

IV. THERE SHALL BE GREAT PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY, 11.6-9. By the figures of speech in verses 6-8 it is usually understood that the prophet

declares the temper of the fiercest beings shall be so changed by the Prince of Peace that they shall live in love with the weakest of men. Dr. George Adam Smith, however, writes: "When Isaiah here talks of the beasts, he means the beasts. The passage is not allegorical, but direct, and forms a parallel to the well-known passage in the eighth of Romans. Isaiah and Paul, chief apostles of the two covenants, both interrupt their magnificent odes upon the outpouring of the Spirit to remind us that the benefits of this shall be shared by the brute and unintelligent creation."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Book of Isaiah. Sechele, a savage chief who had learned to read the Bible, amazed Livingstone one day by remarking, "Teacher, this man Isaiah is a very fine man: he knows how to write." His untutored mind had unaided discovered something of Isaiah's magnificent literary genius. Washington Irving said that before beginning to write he usually read a passage from Isaiah "to fire his mind," and Daniel Webster's customary preparation for the delivery of an oration was to read the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. "The beauty of expression, as well as the depths of thought, are marvelous," said Matthew Arnold.

The book has rich variety and splendor of diction—epic, lyric, and dramatic. Isaiah has been called the most poetic of all the bards of Israel. In our English translation we are unable to see that the greater part of his addresses are poetry, and that "through them all a marvelous lilt and balanced parallelism runs."

More marked is the presence of the dramatic element, "beginning at the moment of Isaiah's first entrance, where like the Greek chorus he calls upon heaven and earth to witness the ingratitude of Israel, clearly manifest in the watchman of Chapter 21, who brings tidings from Babylon and answers the call of Edom; and especially prominent at the close of Chapter 10, when the terrible Assyrian speeds from point to point till at Nob he shakes his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion."

It is the soul that makes the great speaker and writer, and Isaiah's was a great soul. "He lived perpetually in the glory of the Divine majesty." Nowhere will one find profounder thought combined with more glowing feeling, more powerful imagination, and more eloquent oratory—impassioned and moving—than in the Book of Isaiah. The prophet wields at times a two-edged sword, and all his words are instinct with spiritual fire. Where shall we find his equal in versatility? He is a master of satire and pathos, of proverb and parable, of simile and metaphor. His figures of speech are always concrete and so apt that, however often one reads them, their power strikes one anew. From his first words where the heavens are contrasted with the earth, the heavens and earth together with Jehovah, Jehovah with man, his sinful creation, and man with his faithful ox and ass, Isaiah's vivid style is marked by sudden contrasts.

It is difficult to select passages of sustained oratory, vigorous rhetoric, exquisite literary quality, because they are so numerous. The fifty-third chapter is sublime.

Among all the Old Testament books Christianity has received only from the Psalms greater help than from the Book of Isaiah. We can go to this book for light upon the political and social questions which are always with us, and listen to the tremendous invectives against drunkenness and greed and injustice. As Dr. Willits observes: "The city is the great social problem of the age, and Isaiah is the Old Testament specialist on that theme. The sins of the city, its volatile and vibrant life, its opulence, and its pride, all find place in his thought and speech. Our modern city problems are more complex than were those of his time, for sin, which was then largely individual, is today organized and exploited for profit. But the eternal principles which Isaiah applied to the evils of his day are the principles for our age and for all time."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Adult pupils as a rule have but dim ideas of geography, though the happenings of recent years have qualified many in this subject. If you fear no one in your class will be able to answer such questions as those on page 175, ask some one to come prepared by consulting geographies or the World Almanac. If

you unfold a modern map of the world or use a globe, young people will be able to tell you that portions of Columbia, South America, are sparsely inhabited; that the Amazon Valley has never been rescued from its beast-haunted, rank vegetation; that the mines of Tibet are practically untouched; that all the adventurous engineers of the world might find opportunities for fame in irrigating the Sahara.

Every teacher needs to guard against frightening his class by questions which provoke an embarrassing display of ignorance. This is especially dangerous with adults, who should not have questions sprung upon them about what they ought to know but do not.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CONDITIONS OF PERMANENT PEACE

Beginning the Lesson. The poet Tennyson sings in Locksley Hall:—

Then I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

The prophet Isaiah sings:—

It shall come to pass in the latter days.

And what is the vision of the future that both poet and prophet saw? The poet saw the time when

The war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

How did the prophet express his vision of universal peace? Text Explained.

A Case for War or for Arbitration? The people in the country of Harmony worked hard and were thrifty. Through scientific agriculture they obtained more food per acre from their rather poor land than most nations did from richer farms. Their factories were efficiently run. "Made in Harmony" stamped on their goods assured high prices in foreign markets.

But there was unrest in Harmony. Many wanted a better chance to rise and left for other countries where their children speedily forgot their father's homeland and language and customs. Patriotic Harmons deplored this. A group of leaders met to discuss the situation. "We need more land, more trade, more money, more opportunities for our boys and girls," said Tuffelrick. Rusher on the east, and Brusher on the north and Flusher on the west and even Gusher on the southwest, are all arrogant nations united in their hearts to keep us out of our deserts. Let us unite with Westria which lies contiguous to our southern border, and whose people are related to us anyhow, form a great empire called Crusher, go to war with these confining neighbors, crush them one after the other, and charge them all an enormous indemnity. Thus our unsatisfied, aspiring people will have something to occupy their time and minds; our vigorous young people will have active duties; we shall for many years be unafraid of being attacked; and our trade will flourish. Besides, we shall really be doing a service to the people we conquer, for our government is much better run than any of theirs."

"I protest," cried another named Kristlick. "The plan means murder by the wholesale. We can get land and trade and just treatment from neighboring nations in a better way than that. Let us call a congress of the nations, and tell them our predicament. After laying before them our troubles we will say: 'Has any nation a region it would like tilled or mines yet unexplored, or fishing grounds unused, or streams not yet lined with factories, or coasts without seaports? We don't want to emigrate and become lost among you. We want to colonize as once England colonized in America. Will any nation among you aid us with ships, or money? We want to "swarm" as the bees do.' Let us take for granted that the other peoples of the earth feel friendly toward us. Let us show them that we expect friendliness."

If Kristlick's counsel prevailed (in this chronicle by Louise Connolly), what do you think happened? What nations offered territory? On what terms? What nations lent money? Ships? *Could* an exodus like that happen in these days?

Suppose Tuffeldrick's counsel prevailed. Of course, if there were very many people like Kristlick in the country it couldn't prevail. No country would try

to go to war with everybody unless its people were united. But if Tuffeldrick's party owned all the newspapers, most of the Kristlicks could have been deceived. The great question is, if the Tuffeldrickians had succeeded at home, could the people of Rusher or Crusher have avoided the war?

Enders of War. Two or three centuries before Christ a bit of papyrus was put away with an Egyptian mummy on which was inscribed the information that Dorion made a fighting machine so deadly that it was called the "Ender of War." And from that time till now new inventions have been heralded as destined to put an end to war. In our day we were told that aerial navies would form "enders of war." Said Henry Maxim: "The more highly scientific war engineering becomes the more the game of war will be one that can be played only by the most scientific and enlightened nations. Less and less will war be the arbiter of nations, for the difficulties and the expense will become so prohibitive that wars will no longer pay. The aerial navy will be a great bulwark of peace and a very great step toward the permanence of peace."

We were assured, too, that nations were so closely united by their business interests that they could not afford to fight; that the bankers controlled the sinews of war and bankers would not let their governments fight. And then came the greatest war in all history! "Bind me with green withes," said Samson, "and I shall be weak." Wealth, aerial navies, submarines, deadly inventions of all sorts, have not proved to be the green withes by which nations were bound.

We all recall ex-President Wilson's famous "Fourteen Points." Upon them Clemenceau commented, "But the good God only needed ten to settle all humanity." And then Lord Hugh Cecil, upon hearing Clemenceau's *bon mot*, observed, "Remember, it only needed one from the angels to set the whole world right, 'Peace and good will toward men.'"

The only sure ender of war is the spread of the knowledge of the ways of the Lord, and of the universal acceptance of his rule in the hearts of men. When the Brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God are universally accepted, war will cease. When all men's good shall be each man's rule, then, as Tennyson tells us, universal peace shall

> Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
> And like a lane of beams across the sea,
> Through all the circle of the golden year.

War, Peace and Hope. Is the World War to dash our hopes of permanent peace? Quite the contrary, for several reasons. First, the horror, infamy and disaster of the thing has immeasurably increased the knowledge of what war is and the resolve to prevent it. Then there is the fact that much more than ever before this was a war in which the whole manhood of the greatest nations played a personal part, themselves suffering and dying, not sending a selected few of their fellows to do so. Anyone who reads English diaries during the great struggle with Napoleon sees how little the everyday life of ordinary people was affected by it. Not only did the great world of London continue its round of politics, amusement and splendor, undisturbed, but even people like Wordsworth and his sister, passionately as they felt about the war, pursued the even tenor of their quiet life, almost entirely unaffected by it. In this last war all that was quite impossible in any of the belligerent countries. Everyone was in daily anxiety for son or brother or friend, for his own life threatened by air raids, for his own daily bread sunk by submarines or cut off by blockade. Such a universal experience cannot be quickly forgotten and ought to provide a tremendous motive power behind all efforts toward permanent peace.

Then there is the fact that the war has destroyed the two irresponsible military governments that alone desired and brought about the war, and that the third, which wise diplomacy had happily prevented from making the coalition with the other two that was the nightmare of Disraeli and that might have been the destruction of European freedom, lies in a state of total collapse, the joint result of autocratic incompetence and revolutionary insanity. Thus the peoples of Europe have now their fate more in their own hands than ever before. And it is probably safe to say that in every country the people, though more easily excited by a bad press, and indeed narrower and more anti-foreign than the statesmen, is at the same time more averse to war. The heart is always stronger than the head in a democracy; and, although that leads to very warlike en-

thusiasm when once war has begun, the kindliness, pity and revolt against suffering that are the normal state of the heart make the people in peace time very unwilling to contemplate the idea of war.

Then there is one other great ground of hope. The United States has been a partner in this war, and, whatever be the ultimate American decision about the covenant, no Englishman who has faith in the power of ideals will ever be brought to believe that the people of the United States will renounce the hope of helping to create a new and better order in international relations that shall lead to a permanent reign of peace.—John Bailey, in The Youth's Companion.

Is World-wide Permanent Peace Possible? "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb," says Isaiah, and we speak of the prophecy as figurative speech. Yet he does it every day. For by training and breeding men have taken the sheep's worst enemy and changed him into the little lamb's most faithful guardian and friend, the shepherd dog. Every now and then a case occurs in which the old savage tendencies suddenly crop out in some civilized family of dogs, and we have the dog-criminal—the sheep-killer. He shows his original nature. He doesn't kill and eat one sheep. He kills many sheep just for the joy of killing.

And shall God not turn the race of men from warfare to co-operation, from killing one another to helping one another? Has he not the power of pouring his spirit of wisdom and goodwill into every heart that turns to him in prayer? Shall not the Prince of Peace triumph?

Has not the world seen "the glory of the coming of the Lord"? Ten years before the American Revolution, no one in America would have believed that the thirteen colonies would soon become a nation. John Brown, a fanatic, did not live to see the freeing of the slaves, but most of his contemporaries did. National prohibition a few years ago was the fantastic dream of many women and a few men, but today it is here. To speed the day of universal peace we need to unite in expecting it and in working for it. We believe that it is the purpose of God that peace shall reign, that he is waiting for our co-operation in his purpose, that he has given us the honor and joy of helping to bring it about.

For Discussion. 1. War is the most fallacious and futile of human follies.—John Hay.

2. Peace and Pacifism. See Chapter IX of Lest We Forget, by Dr. Hugh Black.

3. The League of Nations.

4. Isaiah, the Court Preacher. See Chapter VII of Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Dr. Rogers.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What period of time is covered by the genealogical tables of the first nine chapters of Chronicles? 2. What portion of the books is devoted to the history of the United Kingdom? 3. What part covers the history of Judah? 4. What could be expected of the son of Ahaz? 5. What good influences and what evil influences surrounded Hezekiah as a youth? 6. Why did the good win out? 7. What reforms were necessary when Hezekiah came to the throne? 8. What unhappy event did Hezekiah ignore when he summoned Israel as well as Judah to celebrate the Passover? (Lesson I of the First Quarter). 9. Would Hezekiah have been justified in reforming his own people only, and letting the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel alone? 10. What irregularities were there in Hezekiah's Passover celebration? 11. Why were they condoned? 12. What did the Passover commemorate? 13. Prove that Hezekiah was courageous; prompt; thorough; wise; reasonable; of a liberal spirit. 14. In view of foes without and indifference within was this spending of money and time on a religious festival wise from a worldly point of view? 15. Is it a sensible thing to begin a drive for money by a dinner at so much a plate? 16. Is a revival of worship needed in our city? 17. Our church? 18. How may it be brought about? 19. What share should our class have in it? 20. Is our nation seeking to do the will of God?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW TO MAKE PEACE AND KEEP IT

Beginning the Lesson. By the time this lesson is studied a great white stone tower will overlook Jerusalem, erected on the Mount of Olives, a mile and

a half northeast of the city, as a memorial of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force of the Great War. A colonnade will surround it. Beneath the tower on the south side toward Jerusalem, a sculptured group will represent mourning women and children of the Allies surmounted by the figure of Victorious Peace, standing in a niche with a wreath beneath her feet. From a vestibule on the north side there will open a Rest Hall in which the names of the five thousand who made the supreme sacrifice will be carved on stone tablets.

Down in South America there is another figure of Victorious Peace. In 1900 Chile and Argentina were on the verge of war over an old boundary dispute, and war preparations were advancing rapidly, when both nations were induced to submit the matter to the King of England for settlement. His decision, based on the reports of eminent lawyers and geographers, gave each nation a part of the disputed territory, and each was satisfied. Both nations signed a treaty agreeing to reduce their armies and navies and to submit, for a term of years, all difficulties for arbitration. Battleships were sold and the proceeds turned to peaceful uses. Men were mustered out who gave up swords and spears for plowshares and pruning-hooks. With the money saved good roads were constructed and harbor improvements made, and the great trans-Andean railway through the mountains was constructed which brings Buenos Ayres and Santiago within eighteen hours of each other. The old distrust gave place to confidence. To mark the great event the women of the two countries had a peace monument erected on the very summit of the Andes, fourteen thousand feet above the sea. From old cannon a statue of Christ was modeled, one hand holding a cross and the other hand extended in blessing. The statue rests upon a globe, on which the map of the world is outlined, and the globe rests upon a granite column. On a tablet these words are engraved: "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than shall the people of Argentina and Chile break the peace to which they have pledged themselves at the feet of Christ the Redeemer."

Which is the better way to gain a peace monument? Which is Isaiah's way? Text Explained.

Which Way is the Right Way? If a boy or man begins a fight, is he always in the wrong? If he has a grievance, or if he thinks he has, how should he be treated by those whom he attacks? Is there often a quarrel in which one side is entirely in the wrong? If the fighting boy has some grounds for his quarrel, what can then be done? But suppose he then mistakes peaceableness for cowardice? If he is altogether to blame, what can a group of honorable boys do with him?

Can a "red-blooded" boy go through life without ever having a fight? What qualities does fighting create or increase? Are any of them good qualities? Can they be produced by any other means than fighting?

Is the person who provokes a fight as much to blame as he who fights? Give examples.

Are there things which you can do to a person that are as injurious to him as striking him? What does it mean to "send a person to coventry"? Is that a proper thing to do? When?

What is war? What is a blockade? Are either ever a proper measure? When? What are their effects?

Seek Peace and Pursue it. Not the peace of quietness, not, at any rate, the quietness of still machinery at work. We have to live together in families, in societies, in nations, as a race. To seek peace is to seek the smooth workings of this complicated fellowship. We are to labor for right adjustments, equitable fellowships. We are to get the gravel and the grit out of the fine machinery. We are to rid human fellowship of its envy and jealousy and thoughtlessness and ill-will. We are to labor that the companionships of God's children may run smoothly without wasting and painful friction.

Seek peace and pursue it. We are not to give up the search because we are not immediately successful. We are to "pursue" the great aim, to chase it with all the eagerness of a keen hunter, determined not to relax the search until the mighty end is gained.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The Prince of Peace. A missionary once said: "I have been laboring among a people who once delighted in war, but since Christianity has prevailed there war has ceased altogether. The last Sabbath I spent with them I went into one of their chapels and preached to a congregation of fifteen hundred persons. A rude sort of pulpit was erected and stairs led up to it, the railings of which,

smooth and polished, were literally made of the handles of warriors' spears by those who had transferred themselves, with their weapons of war, to a nobler and better purpose—the service of the Lord."

In the Great War the French and German armies lay opposite each other in northern France, with a little space between where stood a farm house and its surrounding fields. The firing began briskly on both sides, but suddenly ceased. In the yard before the farmhouse there tottered—a baby! It plucked at a yellow dandelion, missed it, clutched again, succeeded, and burst into crowing laughter. And about the baby there descended peace. Who could fire at the risk of even frightening a laughing baby?

Then a German soldier threw down his gun, climbed out of the trench, ran across the field and picked up the baby, carried it over to the French line, and returned to his place. And on both sides broke out a great cheer.

It must have been hard to begin firing again. Not much could have been achieved by either side at that spot that morning.

What a pity that the ruling powers responsible for the war could not have had trained imaginations to see the hordes of smiling children that their firing would destroy! What a great day of peace that will be when all of us, as anger rises, see before us the smiling face of the Babe of Bethlehem, the Prince of Peace, who brought joy into the world, and who, when he was accused, answered nothing!

The Way of Peace.

The tide of time was full that day
When Christ was born, in peace;
Who now proclaims a worldwide sway,
A rule that must increase:
"If peace you'd find,
Serve me as King,
And peace I'll bring
To all mankind."

Between the nations Peace must grow,
As truth and right prevail;
Within the nations Peace must go
With love that cannot fail.
"Hark!" Christ doth say,
"I give my peace
With large increase:
Come, walk my way."—Canon George Harford.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Force is at best
A fearful thing, e'en in a righteous cause.—Schiller.
Thrice blessed they who make strife cease,
And all their lives are making peace.—Egbert L. Bangs.

"We can do much for peace by simply knowing each other better."

Let us strive to achieve and cherish among ourselves and with all nations a just and lasting peace.—Lincoln.

His name shall be called Prince of Peace.—Isaiah.

Lord of the nations of the world,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!
In peace be all earth's banners furled,
In token of thy Son.—Frank Dempster Sherman.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VI. Isaiah's Ideal for a World at Strife.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What part of the Books of Chronicles is concerned with the history of the United Kingdom? 2. What part deals with the history of Judah only? 3. When and why was the first Passover celebrated? (Ex. 12.1-28). 4. Why did Hezekiah send his invitation to the people of the Northern Kingdom? 5. How were messages sent in those days? 6. How was his message received? 7. What did Hezekiah warn the people not to do? 8. Read 2 Ch. 29 and tell what good things Hezekiah did. 9. What is said about Hezekiah in 2 K. 18.57?

HEZEKIAH LEADS HIS PEOPLE BACK TO GOD

Golden Text

God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him. 2 Chronicles 30.9

LESSON 2 Chronicles 30.1-27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 96.1-10

REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Chronicles 29; 31; 32; 34.29-33; Hosea 14; Amos 9.7-15

2 CHRONICLES 30.1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the assembly in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month. 3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. 4 And the thing was right in the eyes of the king and of all the assembly. 5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem: for they had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written. 6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, who trespassed against Jehovah, the God of their fathers, so that he gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were; but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve Jehovah your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. 9 For if ye turn again unto Jehovah, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, and shall come again into this land: for Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

13 And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. RITUAL WAS MADE FOR MAN AND NOT MAN FOR RITUAL, verses 2-4. Nisan, the first month of the year, corresponding to our month of April, was the regular time for keeping the Passover, but in the reign of Hezekiah it could not be kept *at that time,* because a sufficient number of the priests had not *sanctified themselves* (undergone certain washings, abstinence and forms), nor had the people assembled at Jerusalem, owing to the fact that the temple was not cleansed until the sixteenth day of Nisan, and the fourteenth day was the time for beginning the Passover. Accordingly, *the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the assembly in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month.* The law (Num. 9.10,11) allowed those who for good reasons were prevented from observing the Passover at the regular time to celebrate it in the second month, and *the thing was right in the eyes of the king and all the assembly.* Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown contrasts Hezekiah's broad-minded action with the narrow scruples of those chief priests and Pharisees who were intent upon putting Jesus Christ to death upon the cross at another feast of the Passover, and who would not venture into Pilate's judgment hall lest their holy feet should suffer defilement and make them unfit to share in the sacred feast of the Jewish Church.

II. THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION TO JUDAH AND ISRAEL, verses 1 and 5. So *a decree* was issued for everyone, *from Beersheba to Dan,* to come

CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER ON MT. GEREZIM, ABOVE NABLUS, SAMARIA

The Central Figure is Jacob ben Aaron, late High Priest of the Samaritans.

to Jerusalem and keep the Passover. The customary phrase for the length of the land was "from Dan to Beersheba"; the chronicler, however, in writing the history of Judah naturally mentions the southern city first. A reform was needed, *for they had not kept* the Passover *in great numbers in such sort as it is written;* see Ex. 12.6. Local sanctuaries had been established throughout the land (*2* K. 18.4): Hezekiah would re-establish the supreme importance of the temple, so he wrote letters *to all Israel and Judah* and sent them throughout the land by the *posts,* or couriers. His message was: *Ye children of Israel, turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel* (such a reference to the Hebrew fathers is common in the Old Testament: it served to remind the people of God's favor to them in the past), that he may return to the *remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.* Recall the twelfth lesson of last Quarter, the captivity of Israel. The Assyrian invasion had but recently happened, and Hezekiah warned those who had not been carried away into captivity not to bring upon themselves the punishment which had just befallen their *fathers and brethren. Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary,* Hezekiah counseled, and he held out the hope to them that if they would *serve Jehovah, his fierce anger might turn away from them,* and even those who had already gone into captivity might *come again into this land. For Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.* Some of the northern tribes laughed his messengers to scorn, but certain men of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

III. THE PASSOVER KEPT, verses 13-22. *Much people assembled at Jerusalem to keep the feast of unleavened breaa.* On the fourteenth the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and from the fourteenth to the twenty-first the unleavened bread was eaten: both names, accordingly, *Passover* and *Feast of Unleavened Bread* were given to the combined feast as a whole. "It was as if some International Convention of Christian Endeavor had come from the north and the south, the east and the west, and from lands beyond the seas, to share in the inspiration and fellowship of high hours of privilege."

IV. THE PASSOVER PROLONGED, verses 23-27.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

To keep the Passover, verse 1. In the feast of the Passover, the flight of the Israelites, its darkness, its hurry and confusion, was acted year by year, as in a sacred drama. Night falls: the stars come out; the bright moon is in the sky; the household gathers round, and then takes place the meal, of which every part is marked by the almost frantic haste of the first celebration, when Pharaoh's messengers were expected every instant to break in with the command: "Get you forth from among my people." The guests of each household at the moment of the meal rise and stand around the table. Their feet, usually bare when in the house, are shod as for a journey. Each member of the house holds a staff, as if for immediate departure; the long Eastern garments of the men are girt up, for the same reason, round their loins. The roasted lamb is torn to pieces, each snatching in his eager fingers the morsel which he might not else have time to eat. Not a fragment is left for the morning, as if it would find them gone and far away. The cakes of bread which they break and eat are tasteless for the want of leaven, as if there had been no leisure to prepare it, and finally the thanksgiving for the deliverance is always presented.—Dean Stanley, in History of the Jewish Church.

Had not sanctified themselves, verse 3. A missionary in India was teaching in the home of a Brahman when two of the children entered and ran to their mother. Drawing herself away the mother asked, "Have you bathed?" When they said they had not the mother scolded them severely, and sent them off to be sprinkled lightly with cold water. To the missionary the mother explained: "They have just come from your school, and have been with lower caste children, so they are unclean, and must not touch me till they have bathed."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. For what purpose did Asa assemble a great convocation at Jerusalem? How did Joash show his love for

God's house? How did Uzziah show lack of reverence for the temple? What vision did Isaiah have that was influenced by his love for the temple? What kings had neglected the temple? What made the first king of Israel begin the worship of the golden calves?

The Prosperity of Hezekiah's Reign. While Isaiah the prophet lived and labored in Judah, there were four kings on the throne: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. From his father Hezekiah inherited "an empty treasury, a ruined peasantry, an unprotected frontier, and a shattered army." All these conditions Hezekiah changed. "Both in the capital and in the country he promoted the arts of peace like his ancestor Uzziah," says Schürer. "Towers and enclosures sprang up for the vast herds and flocks of the pastoral districts. The vineyards, oliveyards, and cornfields were again cultivated. The towers and fortifications of Jerusalem, the supply of water to the town, both by aqueduct from without and by reservoir hewn out of the solid rock, were for centuries connected with his name. 'Peace and truth' were the watchwords of his reign. When the merits of the kings were summed up after the fall of the monarchy, Hezekiah was, by deliberate judgment, put at the very top. There was 'after him, none like him among the kings of Judah, nor any that was before him.'" We must not neglect to note that much of Hezekiah's wisdom and righteousness was due to the prophet Isaiah, whose convictions and teachings Hezekiah wrought into deeds.

Hezekiah's Reforms. Upon his accession to the throne Hezekiah began his reforms. There were heathen altars everywhere in Jerusalem, idolatrous high places throughout Judah, the temple was polluted and closed, the lamps were put out, the sacred vessels were removed, and the priests and Levites were scattered. Hezekiah directed the Levites to cleanse the temple. When this work was completed he re-inaugurated the temple services with a great dedication feast, with its sin offerings and burnt-offerings, thank-offerings and peace-offerings. "So the service of the house of Jehovah was set in order."

Hezekiah's next step was to send letters summoning all Israel as well as Judah to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. The idolatrous altars that had been erected throughout the city were broken up and the débris was cast into the brook Kidron before the paschal lambs were sacrificed on the fourteenth of the month. Priests and Levites, seeing the zeal of the people, were ashamed of their earlier delay, and after making themselves ceremonially clean according to the law, they carried out their duties.

The Chronology of Hezekiah's Reign. Dates are confused and obscure. According to 2 K. 18.10, Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, was taken by the Assyrians in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign. Six years before 721 B. C., the date of Samaria's fall, gives 727 B. C. as the year in which Hezekiah became king of Judah. But according to 2 K. 18.13 Sennacherib invaded Judah in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah. Fourteen years before the Assyrian invasion in 701 B. C. gives the year 715 as the date of the accession of Hezekiah. To reconcile these dates it has been suggested that Hezekiah reigned with his father Ahaz from 727 to 715 B. C.

Upon the date of Hezekiah's accession depends our understanding of the words "all Israel," verses 1 and 6, and of "the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hands of the kings of Assyria." If it was before the fall of Samaria, then the invitation was sent to the Northern Kingdom, and the Assyrian king was Tilgath-pilneser. If he came to the throne after the fall of Samaria, he made his appeal to the few who were left in the Northern Kingdom after most of their number had been taken into captivity by Sargon II of Assyria. This is the natural interpretation of verse 6.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The cities of *Dan* and *Beersheba*, 150 miles apart—as far as from New York to Albany, were regarded as at the northern and southern limits of the undivided kingdom of David and Solomon. Dan was twelve miles north of Lake Huleh. Beersheba was forty-six miles south of Jerusalem.

The idolatrous altars were cast into the brook Kidron. The Kidron is a winter torrent, dry in summer, which separates Jerusalem on the east from the Mount of Olives. Thence the valley extends southeastwardly through the Wil-

derness of Judah to the Dead Sea. It is often spoken of in the Old Testament as a place for casting out rubbish.

Assign paragraph 120 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Had Hezekiah seen a vision? He acted as though he had. His friend and tutor had been Isaiah, who naturally would have opened the eyes of his royal pupil to visions. Hezekiah does not mention his indebtedness to Isaiah. Youth is prone in following visions to forget the one who drew the curtain. Isaiah, however, had his reward. And so will you, whether or not the debt is acknowledged by your pupils.

When the old see a vision, it comforts them. When the young see a vision, it inspires them to *what?* Hezekiah was inspired to prompt action (2 Ch. 29.3).

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
WISE METHODS OF REFORM

Beginning the Lesson. "I am surrounded by so many facts that I cannot tell which is important," said a perplexed and puzzled man in the midst of a confusing situation. A throne is a place where it is easy to become dizzy. So many facts keep buzzing about your ears. So many voices keep calling. So many forces keep pressing in upon you.

The same confusing situation which confronted Ahaz let its cloud fall about Hezekiah. Assyria was a fact you could never long forget. Could a small power live in the presence of this great power? Might a number of small powers joined together hold their own against the greatest power of all? Might some triumph of political sagacity result in an alliance which would save Judah? Were not matters of state policy the great matters which the reign of Hezekiah must face? How the questions lifted themselves, and what eager voices discussed them! The danger was that the king would be lost in the confusion of conflicting policies or that in sheer reaction he would be careless of matters of state and descend to a life of carelessness or selfish indulgence. Such tests as these Hezekiah met, and on the whole he emerged with a very creditable record.

"No king is safe who is not loyal to an authority greater than himself." So declared a man who knew well the story of many kings and kingdoms. Here you strike the defining matter in the reign of Hezekiah. He was loyal to an authority greater than himself. The worship of Jehovah was given a new vitality throughout the kingdom. Members of tribes belonging to the other kingdom were invited to join in the great revival of Jehovah worship. A new spirit moved through the capital city and among the people.

In the reign of Hezekiah diplomacy was not to be given the first place and religion made incidental. Religion was to be made central and king and people were to join in the worship of Jehovah and in obedience to his behests.—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, in The Christian Advocate.

The Renaissance of Religion. A powerful English writer once published a little poem entitled "The Funeral of God." Many people have been ready to celebrate the obsequies of religion. We remember that Bishop Butler fell upon a time when religion had almost ceased to be able, as he felt, to command the interest of intelligent men. But the religion which is thrown to the ground has a curious way of turning out to be a seed instead of a corpse. Life emerges from it. There are sproutings and growings, and soon the tree is lifting its branches again, and ere long once more men are rejoicing in its abundant shade. It almost seems that the world might have learned that religion possesses a secret of perpetual life. Just when you think that it is dead it is born again. There was something imperial about the way in which the Christian religion swept in triumph over the early Roman Empire. It was simply impossible to kill Christians as fast as other men accepted the Christian faith. And so after three centuries of struggle the empire surrendered and became Christian. But if Christianity conquered the empire it did not save the empire. The barbarians overwhelmed the orderly civilization which had given stability to the life of the world. Surely, we would say, the religion which failed to revitalize the empire would go down under the ashes of its burning structure. But it was not so. Emerging fresh and vital from the flames of a burning world, Christianity set about taming the barbarians. It put its hand upon the fierce and powerful men

who had conquered Rome. And it mastered them. It bent them to gentler and wiser forms of life. It dominated their thinking and recreated their ideals. And out of them it began forming the Europe which was to be. In the meantime the Church which had been a life became an organization. The vitality was lost in the complex wheels of a vast machinery. More of Jewish and Roman law than Christian Gospel was found in the Imperial Church. Surely religion was lost in all this brilliant and far-flung ecclesiastical empire? But no. Just that thirteenth century which witnessed the splendors of Innocent III, also witnessed the winsome piety of Saint Francis of Assisi and all that movement by which Europe was refreshed in spirit as by the coming of spring. The singing Franciscans with their self-forgetful service fanned the soul of Europe into a bright flame, the flame of that fire which is burning without being consumed. Then came an era of distintegration. And when life seemed to have departed from the life-giver, when the world needed to be saved from the Church, when it seemed that religion had indeed failed upon its last battlefield, and the new learning rather than the old religion was offering open doors of life to men, once again the golden moment came, and the sixteenth century saw the kindling of all those fires of the spirit which made religion the master of the inner life of man and the captain of his activities. The Reformation was a rebirth of religion just when such a rebirth might have seemed least probable. But the Reformation itself at last crystallized into forms which had lost their vitality. There came the day of the Protestant scholasticism with all its arid and lifeless activities of the mind. But just when the freezing cold of it seemed to have swept away the warm and rich currents of life Pietism came sweeping into Germany, and the seventeenth century had its rebirth of the spirit. By the eighteenth century the cold hardness of deism had entered deep into the fabric of England's life. Then it was that Bishop Butler found and bewailed the situation to which we have already referred. But we remember his words only as a background to that sweeping revival which changed the face of England and put evangelical religion at the heart of its life. The worst moment turned out to be the moment just before that rebirth which saw the beginning of a new era. Historically it has been a dangerous thing to arrange for the obsequies of religion.

It is very important to have all this, and indeed very much more than this, in the background of our minds when we come to consider the situation in which we find ourselves. We have told only a little of the story, but we have outlined at least enough of it to suggest the amazing recuperative powers which are possessed by the Christian faith. Today once more the tide is ebbing. We are living in an age of unrest and confusion and disillusionment. And a good many noble spirits are fearing that Christianity will not rise triumphant from the wreck into which so much of contemporary life has fallen.

It is important to recognize that the heart of contemporary pessimism is not merely a distrust of religion; it is a distrust of life itself. It will occur at once to some of us that a worldwide suspicion that civilization has the seed of decay in it, a worldwide distrust of the powers of man, is not a matter to dishearten the Christian. As a matter of fact, such experiences are preparing the soil for a new activity of religion. The complacent age is the only age which Christianity cannot touch.

Another aspect of the present situation deserves our attention. More and more are masses of men confident in their belief that the Church has failed them. The scornful sense that it has inflated its verbal currency and has had no store of gold to justify its productivity in paper-money has made its way almost everywhere. No doubt the Church deserves much of this hostility. No doubt it has failed in moral strength, in spiritual insight, in practical brotherhood, in capacity for leadership, and in that intellectual acumen which really penetrates to the heart of a situation. Even so we must insist that it has done more to keep the soul alive in the present day than any of its critics are ready to admit. And we must protest against that lighthearted condemnation which is based upon no study either of the difficulties which the Church has confronted or of the stupendous services which it has rendered in spite of those difficulties. At once, however, we must declare that the root of the situation is not to be found here. Religion and an institution are not synonymous. "Church" and "Christianity" are not two different words for the same thing. If an organization represents the living Christ incompletely or even with gross inadequacy, we find it all the

more necessary to push aside the instrument and to reach the Master himself. The word of Browning's great poem is the word for the ages: "See the Christ stand."

Our leaders must pay the price of a new and resilient and kindling relation to their Master and Lord. The moment of preoccupation with him and with his creative loving power is the moment when great creative and transforming energies begin to be realized upon the life of the world. Men and women and little children everywhere must be encouraged to make the Christian religion a personal adventure of the spirit. So the song which the Franciscans sang over Europe in the thirteenth century and which swept over England in the eighteenth century shall once more move over the land. With all this creative renewal of the inner life at every step the new life within must become a new life without. The new heart must become the new activity. The social program must be seized and revitalised and made effective and triumphant by those who bring to it the resources of a vital contact with the Savior of the world. All this must be interpreted by minds sharp with all the powers of close analysis in the speech which our contemporary experience has made compelling. And thus with a new spirit of prophecy and a new spirit of action based upon a new anticipation in the energies released by the living Christ we shall go forth into that day which contains all for which we hope. The renaissance of religion will be an actuality in our hearts and before our eyes.—Condensed from a sermon delivered in England by Dr. Lynn Harold Hough.

How to Reform a Nation. Appeals are now before Congress and the State legislatures for the passage of hundreds, if not thousands, of laws for the reform of various abuses. The idea seems to prevail that if a law is enacted forbidding anything that thing will no longer be done. Men and women trust in the efficacy of a statute, forgetting that in a free country law is really nothing more than the will of a majority. Many a statute which has been passed because no one could raise an objection to its desirability has been so remote from the general state of public and private practice that it has never been enforced.

The effective remedy for abuses lies in an awakened public sentiment rather than in new laws. Laws are important and necessary, but one should never forget that the passage of a law is the smallest part of a great reform. The struggle comes when the law is to be enforced, and the struggle is especially hard when the law is in advance of public sentiment. Such progress as is made is based upon the growth in grace of the common man.—The Youth's Companion.

How to Reform Individuals. When Dean Farrar was put in charge of Canterbury Cathedral, he sought to restore the ancient church which was founded by St. Augustine to its original beauty and grandeur. To do this he wisely refrained from tearing down any part of it, and from adding a single wall or pillar. He simply removed the heaped dust of ages, and cleaned away the grime with which irreverent time had hidden the beautiful frescoes upon the walls.

His work was successful. The graves of martyrs who died for the cause which they believed to be true were discovered; beautiful chapels were dug out of the heaped earth, in which ages ago men and women, striving to find God, prayed to him, and from the cleaned walls the faces of holy men of old again looked down with warning or triumph in their eyes.

Americans have no ancient cathedrals to clean and restore. In this country now the work of reform is that of human beings. Christians and agnostics are alike busy with schemes to uplift the degraded and criminal classes. Perhaps they could gain a useful hint in their work from the wise dean.

If you would help your neighbor, don't begin by battering down his manners, his prejudices, his individual character, or by building up your own mind in him. Clean away the rubbish of his evil life, and uncover the original good in him.

Bishop Johns, preaching to the negro convicts in a Richmond jail, once said, "Don't think of your thefts and fights, but of the time when you were good boys, and knew nothing of stealing and killing."

In the hearts of many of the worst men as in the dark crypts of the cathedral lie hidden forgotten altars and the likeness of a holy face. Uncover them. David, after all his crimes, said of God, "He *restoreth* my soul."—The Youth's Companion.

How to Reform the Church. Is it more organization? Is it more read-

ing and conscientious study of the Bible? Is it more insistent and sustained prayer? Is it more regular attendance at church services? Is it ability to account for the life and needs of every individual whose name now appears on the church roster? Is the need of your church more virile men who will stand abreast with you in facing the oncoming enemies of him whose church includes all others and of which every one of us is a unit?

To be sure the need of the Church in New York is more men, more prayer, more Bible reading, more unity of effort and directness of purpose. But how is this complete need to be supplied? I venture to say that the greatest need of the Church in New York today is a revival of religion. A religious revival. A revival of the religious impulses which we all have had. A revivifying of our spiritual hopes and a revitalizing of its ministers and a life-producing unity of intercourse among all men who have pledged themselves to the service of propagating the faith.—C. W. Welch, in The New York Tribune.

For Discussion. 1. King Hezekiah. See Volume II, Lecture 38, of Stanley's History of the Jewish Church.

2. Church rituals: their use and abuse. Ritual was made for man, and not man for ritual. "Everything regarding form is elastic in the interests of the soul."

3. Great revivals. "All the great revivals have begun with the people of God: after they have been quickened and cleansed, Divine life has flowed through them into the world.—Francis E. Smiley. Churches don't need new members half so much as they need the old bunch made over.—Billy Sunday.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire chapter and also 2 K. 22.1 to 23.30. 2. How was the book of the law lost and forgotten? 3. What was the book of the law? 4. What was the result of finding it? 5. What is meant by "made a covenant before Jehovah"? 6. What is meant by "stand to it"? 7. How may the Bible be lost today? 8. Do you really possess your Bible? 9. Into how many languages has the Bible been translated? 10. Bring to class the words of noted men about the Bible to which you subscribe.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PUTTING RELIGION FIRST

Beginning the Lesson. As the runner, bearing news from the South, toiled up the hill upon which stood the city of Jokneam, not far from Mount Carmel, the inhabitants crowded into the market place that they might miss no word of the tidings. The last time the post had visited them it had been to announce the death of Ahaz and the accession of Hezekiah to the throne. Amongst the crowd awaiting the news were two—father and son—who spoke together in a low tone, unheard by the excited, pushing folk about them.

"This will be the first proclamation of King Hezekiah," said the father. "God grant it may be in keeping with his holy religion!" He glanced up disdainfully to the high ground upon which gleamed a gilded statue of Baal, the sun-god.

"Would it not be well, father," asked the boy, "that we should pull down that idol some night—you and I—as did Gideon in olden days?"

The father smiled. "Dost thou remember, my son, what the men of Ophrah would have done to Gideon for that piece of work?"

"I remember," answered the boy, gravely, "what Gideon's father said to the men, how he bade them let Baal himself avenge the deed."

"That is true! But hush, my son, and listen!"

The runner from the South had by now got back his breath from the climb up to the city. He stood upon a platform in the centre of the market-place, and, holding up a scroll of parchment, began to read, in a loud voice, the king's proclamation. With kindly persuasion, Hezekiah besought the people to give up their idolatry and return to the Lord. He desired them once again to worship in Jerusalem at the appointed feasts, especially the approaching Passover, and concluded with the beautiful words: "For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn his face from you, if ye return to him."

"Father," the boy whispered, excitedly, "I have never been to Jerusalem! Will you not go to the feast and take me with you?"

"So, Ishmael," said the lads, his companions, to him, "thou hast been to the Passover! And what good has it done thee?"

"It was glorious!" answered the boy. "I would ye had but seen the animals for the sacrifices! Two thousand bullocks and seventeen thousand sheep! And the priests, all in white, and the temple, golden and shining, and the great candlesticks, and the music!"

"Thou wert away more than the week, Ishmael," said one of the lads.

"Aye," answered Ishmael, "the king asked if all were willing to spend another seven days in worship, and all were very willing, for they said there had not been so joyful a time in Jerusalem since the days of our lord King Solomon. And what think ye?" went on the boy, excitedly, "there is not a heathen altar or image to be seen in Jerusalem. The king has had them all taken away. He says he will trust only in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! And now there are men coming all through the country to throw down the altars and break the images!"—Condensed from the story told by Emily Huntly, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Hezekiah Put First Things First. Ahaz had been a weak and wicked king, and when Hezekiah came to the throne so many reforms were needed that he might well have wondered where to begin. Assyria, that great nation, was encroaching upon Judah, and Hezekiah might have thought that to ward off this enemy was the first thing upon which to concentrate his energies. Hezekiah knew, however, that true prosperity could not come to a nation that was not right with God. The most important thing for a nation, as well as for a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, is the right attitude toward God. See The Historical Background and page 183.

Seek ye First the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness. Mr. Chesterton called these words of Christ "the most business-like thing that was ever said in human history." It means to put righteousness first in all our thoughts. "Anything which makes religion its second object, makes religion no object," declared Ruskin emphatically. "God will put up with a great many things in the human heart, but there is one thing he will not put up with in it—a second place. He who offers God a second place, offers him no place."

Uncle Eben, in Forward, calls this "an unaccommodating text." "Ef it had only said, 'Seek ye second the kingdom of God,' it 'u'd 'a fitted in so much better. Most any Christian kin stand that test. Even when their hearts is set on makin' money, 'nd it's allers their first thought from mornin' until night, still most of 'em 'u'd be quite willin' to give second place to religion. Society 'nd the fashions hev to be followed, and followed first, of course, but religion is so respectable if you kin fit into the back seat that many folks 'u'd be just charmed with that kind of a revised version. 'Nd the people who put their reason 'nd intellect first, 'nd the word of God second—they'd be satisfied, too."

Where Do You Put the most Emphasis? Do you use a typewriter? Which letters do you strike most often? These are the letters which you would expect to find had left upon the cylinder the clearest impress, are they not? Some one found on an old cylinder what seemed to be a row of periods and of the letters *b* and *v* in every line, while all the rest was blurred. They had not been used nearly so often as the other letters, but they had received the strongest blows. So it is not the things which we do the oftenest, but the things on which we place the most emphasis, that leave their deepest impression upon our character.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Christ.

We can never begin good things too early.—Alexander Maclaren.

The less must always give way to the greater.—Joseph Parker.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VII. Hezekiah's Great Passover.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson 1. Who started to repair the temple which resulted in finding the book of the Law? 2. How old was Josiah when he began to reign? (2 Ch. 34.1). 3. Who found the book and what did he do with it? 4. Who read it to the king? (verse 18). 5. Read Dt. 12.26 and imagine the feelings of Josiah on hearing these words read. 6. Why did the king rend his clothes? 7. What was the result of the reading of the book? 8. What was the book of the Law? 9. Have you a Bible of your own? 10. Do you read it daily? 11. If your Bible is not read, is it a lost book to you?

HILKIAH'S GREAT DISCOVERY

Golden Text

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path. Psalm 119.105

LESSON 2 Chronicles 34.14-33 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 19.7-14

REFERENCE MATERIAL Deuteronomy 6.6-9; Joshua 1.8; Colossians 3.16; 2 Timothy 2.15; 3.14-16

2 CHRONICLES 34.14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah *given* by Moses. 15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. 16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and moreover brought back word to the king, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they are doing.

29 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, both great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of Jehovah. 31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32 And he caused all that were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JOSIAH'S EARLY REFORM MEASURES, verses 1-7. Josiah became king of Judah when eight years of age, and during his reign of thirty-one years he "wholly followed the Lord." When sixteen years of age his loyalty to God was very marked. At twenty he began his active work of reforming his kingdom, clearing out all the idols, destroying the idolatrous places of worship, breaking up the graven images, pounding them to dust and scattering the dust upon the graves of idolaters, and even in his zeal digging up the bones of priests of Baal and burning them upon the Baal altars. These reform measures he carried out also in the now desolate cities of Northern Israel.

II. THE WORK WHICH LED TO THE FINDING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, verses 9-13. When twenty-six years of age King Josiah turned his attention to the ruined temple and repaired it. He placed the governor of Jerusalem, the official secretary and the official historian in charge, and they handed over to Hilkiah, the high priest, the money which had been brought by the people to the house of God and given into the charge of the Levites appointed to receive it. The men who did the work of repairing the temple were faithful. The overseers were Levites, other Levites encouraged the workmen with music, yet other Levites were scribes and officers and porters. The work progressed rapidly.

III. THE FINDING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, verses 14,15. During the work upon the temple, *Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah given by Moses.* It was probably the legal portions (chapters twelve to twenty-six and chapter twenty-eight) of our Book of Deuteronomy, which calls itself "The Book of the Law" and also "The Book of the Covenant": Josiah's reforms followed the lines laid down in these chapters. Some scholars believe that it had long been known, but had been forgotten during the idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon, and now Hilkiah found the copy in the temple and read it to Josiah for the first time. Others hold that it was "a new and enlarged edition of the Book of the Covenant prepared for the needs of the times,

and brought forth now because Josiah was a righteous king who would enforce its decrees." Dr. George Adam Smith points out that it is precisely from this time onward that the style and phraseology which are characteristic of Deuteronomy begin to affect the literature of Israel. In Dt. 31.9,26, Moses is said to have written the Law and to have delivered it to the priests. Yet there are evidences in the book that some portions of it were added by a writer subsequent to Moses. For example, Moses could not have written chapter 34, the account of his death. The phrase "beyond Jordan" for the eastern side of the river would be used only by one living in Western Palestine, and Moses never crossed the Jordan. It speaks of boundary marks which had been set up by "those of the olden time" (19.14), indicating that when the words were written the Israelites had long been settled in the land. Deuteronomy may contain laws and customs, not of a single lifetime, but developed by many generations of God-inspired men, expressed in the form of valedictory orations of the great lawgiver.

Hilkiah told Shaphan the scribe of the discovery and gave him the book to carry to Josiah the king when he made his report in regard to the progress of the work upon the temple. The text says that *Hilkiah answered and said:* no question is recorded, but this verb *answered* is often used when the answer is to unexpressed thoughts. The word *scribe* means literally *man of books;* a scribe was editor and interpreter as well as copyist.

A Scribe with his Scroll

IV. THE EFFECT UPON JOSIAH OF THE READING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, verses 16-21. After telling Josiah that the work was progressing well, the money having been given to the overseers and the workmen put at work, Shaphan spoke about the book and read it aloud, the entire roll according to 2 K. 22.10. On hearing the words, the King *rent his clothes* in token of his troubled mind; *for,* he said, *great is God's wrath against us, because our fathers have not done as this book commands.* "To realize the effect of the book upon the susceptible soul of Josiah, we must read it ourselves, that is, read chapters 22-26 of Deuteronomy. The book contains explicit directions as to worship and conduct, and the penalty of national disobedience decreed the loss of home and country. For many generations warnings and precepts had been alike neglected, and when the day of doom should come, the sins of the fathers also would be visited upon the children. Could the doom be averted by speedy and complete obedience and penitence? (McCurdy).

V. THE PREDICTIONS OF HULDAH THE PROPHETESS, verses 22-28. Josiah chose five men to make *inquiries of the Lord* for him and his people. They went to Huldah the prophetess. Consequences could not be averted, she warned them, but assured them that because the King had humbled himself the punishment should not be meted out during his reign.

VI. THE RESULT OF THE READING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, verses 29-33. The King called a representative assembly to Jerusalem, *both great and small,* and after having them listen to the reading of the words of the book, he covenanted before them to keep God's commandments with heart and soul, and then called upon the assembly *to stand to it,* to signify their willingness also to obey, probably by a rising vote. As long as the king lived they kept this covenant. Read the fuller account of Josiah's reformations given in 2 K. 23.4-20.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The book, verse 14. Our word *volume* comes from the Latin noun *volumen,* meaning a roll of writing, formed from the latin verb *volvere,* to *roll.* Sheets of papyrus, and later of parchment, were joined together so as to form one continuous sheet, and then rolled upon a staff into a volume. The book found in

the temple was such a volume or scroll. Similar scrolls are used today in Jewish synagogues.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What boy king have we seen upon the throne of Judah? Who began to rule in Judah when sixteen years of age? What efforts at keeping the temple in repair have we seen made? Name two kings who were partly responsible for the loss of the Book of the Law.

Scrolls

Hezekiah and the Assyrian Invasion. For more than a quarter of a century the Kingdom of Judah had been menaced by Assyria. Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, had done homage to the Assyrian king, and both he and Hezekiah had been almost vassal kings of the great Assyrian Empire. In 722 B. C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been conquered by Sargon II, king of Assyria, and the people carried into captivity. Sargon was succeeded by Sennacherib, who reigned 705-681 B. C.

Meanwhile Hezekiah had defeated the Philistines (2 K. 18.8), had prepared Jerusalem to withstand a siege by having a conduit for water built (2 K. 20.20), and, contrary to Isaiah's counsels, had sent gifts to Egypt to gain her promise of aid in a revolt from Assyrian control. Chapters 28 to 31 of Isaiah give the prophet's rousing sermons delivered at this time: his words of warning against trusting in Egypt, whose weakness he well perceived; his assurance of the futility of revolt against Assyria, whose strength he likewise saw: and his counsels to trust in Jehovah, who alone could deliver them. His "precept upon precept" fell on dull ears, and he declared that "by men of strange lips and with another tongue" they should be made to hear.

In 701 B. C. Sennacherib's army moved westward against the rebels along the Mediterranean shore. Hezekiah yielded and sent this message to Sennacherib at Lachish: "I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me will I bear." And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

To pay this tribute, Hezekiah had to empty his own treasury and that of the temple, and even to strip the portals of the Sanctuary of the gold that covered them. It did not prevent Sennacherib, however, from sending a great army to lay siege to Jerusalem.

In "this day of trouble, of rebuke and of contumely" Hezekiah turned to Isaiah for counsel, and Isaiah prophesied the retreat of Sennacherib.

Manasseh's Reign. Jerusalem was saved from capture by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's reign, but Judah either remained a subject kingdom of Assyria or was made one soon after Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, came to the throne. During Manasseh's reign all western Asia and Egypt were included in the great Assyrian Empire. An inscription on a triumphal stele of Esar-haddon (son of Sennacherib and king of Assyria 680-668 B. C.) gives a list of twenty-two tributary kings who furnished building material for his new palace, and among them is "Manasseh, king of the country of Judah."

Manasseh became king of Judah at twelve years of age, and his long reign of fifty-five years was an evil one. He adopted the worship of the heathen nations about him: rebuilt the high places for worship which his father Hezekiah had labored to destroy: erected altars for the worship of false gods; worshipped the heavenly bodies: desecrated the holy temple with heathen altars; made his children suffer in the heathen rites he practised: engaged in augury, enchantments, sorcery: had friendly dealings with wizards: and even put an image of an idol, made by human hands, in the house of God: broke the covenant which God had made with his people, for its blessings depended on their

keeping his laws: and led Judah astray so that they did worse than the heathen nations.

Judah's Apostasy. Throughout the history of Judah we see that the people readily followed their king. The great religious reforms of Hezekiah were quickly succeeded in his son's reign by a revival of heathen idolatry. Under Hezekiah the people had grown to a higher spiritual stature than under any previous king. Under Manasseh, his son, the process was reversed. How could the change take place so rapidly? Dr. George Adam Smith explains that "We must recall the prevalence of such forms of worship all around Judah, but especially in Samaria; and also the probable addition to the population from the Judean towns devastated by Sennacherib in which Canaanite cults still survived, from the Palestinian and Phœnician cities that had suffered by the campaigns of Esar-haddon and Assurbanipal, and from the great increase in trade under the Assyrian Lordship of Western Asia."

Josiah and his Counsellors. Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon, who followed the evil practices of his father before his reformation. After two years Amon was slain by his court officials, who in turn were put to death by the people, and his son Josiah was placed on the throne.

"In Josiah's youthful training is probably to be found the explanation of his remarkable character and work," writes Professor Kent. "The probabilities strongly support the conclusion that his youthful teacher was the prophet Zephaniah, whose sermons roused the nation as well as the young king. The stern, uncompromising spirit which characterizes the prophet's reform sermons, is reflected in the extreme measures adopted later by Josiah. Jeremiah must have been born during the closing years of Manasseh's reign, and was therefore a contemporary of king Josiah and of the royal prophet Zephaniah. In the light of the narrative of Kings it is evident that Zephaniah and Jeremiah did not stand alone in their efforts for reform. Hilkiah, the priest, was in full sympathy with the new movement. And Josiah had gathered about him a group of able officers who supported him in his reform measures."

"The accession of the young king Josiah marks an important transition in the history of Judah. The beginning of his reign witnessed the passing of the authority of Assyria, and its close the appearance of the new world power, the Chaldeans, on the horizon of Southwestern Asia. His reign (639-608 B. C.) was during the calm between two great wars of foreign invasion."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

This lesson affords opportunity for enlisting pupils of all ages in the formation of purposeful Bible study habits. Incite them to form voluntarily memorizing groups, to meet during the week, or before or after class, and recite passages selected by the members in rotation from the Devotional Readings given for the lessons (printed in the heading of each lesson in this book). Each group can give ratings to its members, and the several groups—if the class is large enough—can choose champions in a memorizing competition. Ask the superintendent or the pastor to award the honors.

Intermediates and Seniors have for their topic this week, "How to Make the Bible Our Own." We make anything our own by appreciating it, by desiring it, by pursuing it, by appropriating it, by using it, by enjoying it, by sharing it. Give these points to several pupils, a different one to each, and ask them to come prepared to illustrate them in regard to the Bible.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE BIBLE IN THE LIFE OF A NATION

Beginning the Lesson. Professor G. C. Cell, in an article in The Methodist Review, quotes Cornill as saying: "It is inconceivable that a book so significant as the Book of the Law should have vanished, leaving no trace behind, and that, too, in an age when the richest literary life prevailed in Israel." Professor Naville, one of the leading Egyptologists of our day, shows by finds in Egypt that such a thing is not "inconceivable." He shows that from time immemorial it was the custom to bury sacred books or laws at the feet of a god or in the foundation of a temple. This custom prevailed in Egypt and Babylon.

He quotes a rubric attached to a chapter of the Book of the Dead, which had been buried for generations before its discovery by the king's son while inspecting the temples of Egypt. "He brought it to the king as a marvel when he saw that it was something very mysterious which no one had ever seen or set eyes on before."

How have ancient manuscripts come down to us? How did it happen that so many of them were discovered in the very nick of time? What would have been the effect on human civilization, on literature, on science, on philosophy, had they not been discovered? The discoveries of precious manuscripts have all been, seemingly, purely accidental; what part, then, has accident played in the world's development and what part, Divine agency?

Few books have had greater influence on the human mind than the works of Aristotle. How did they come down to us? When Aristotle was about to die, he bequeathed his manuscripts to a disciple, Theophrastus, he to one Neleus. This man, on account of war raging, hid the treasure in a cellar, and, dying soon after, forgot to tell anyone what he had done with the manuscripts. Thus for two hundred years the works of Aristotle were buried from human sight. Insects, mold and other destructive agencies had eaten into the text, but we owe it to an accident that a book collector, Ampellicon of Teos, discovered the manuscript before it was totally destroyed.

We wonder about the Book of Deuteronomy being found in the temple, do we? A French nobleman found a part of a manuscript of Livy's History on his racquet bat. He went to the maker of the bat, but found the parchment had all been used up. The Digest of Roman Law, by the Emperor Justinian, was found by soldiers in the débris of a city they had captured. Coming to later days, it is not a little surprising that the original manuscript of the Magna Charta was discovered in the hands of a tailor who was cutting it for patterns. Lady Montague's letters were found in a false bottom of an old trunk, and what a story is that of the discovery of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's autobiography; of one of the cantos of Dante's Paradise, which had fallen behind a window sill; of Milton's tractate on The Doctrines of Christianity; of Benvenuto's memoirs, and of many other writings that might be mentioned; the Codex Sinaiticus, the Logia, or sayings, of our Lord and other papyri found in Egypt by Grenfell and Harris and the Misses Lewis; the Ostraca from the dust heaps of forgotten towns which now give data for Professor Deissman's great work, Light from the Ancient East.—Adapted from an article in The Christian Advocate, by Bishop R. J. Cooke.

Josiah's Bible and Ours. What is it all about? It is about the moral law, the holy counsels of the Lord; it is about the early Scriptures. It was a very tiny Bible that they had in those days. We have treasures of an incomparably richer order than any which belonged to them. We have all theirs, plus the immeasurable riches; we have their tiny Bible with the incomparable riches of the New Testament. We have their commandments, and we have our Beatitudes. We have the Book of Deuteronomy, but we have the Gospel of John. We have all that they had of the Psalms, but we have also the Epistles. We have the Law, but we have the Holy Gospel of Grace and Love. We have Moses, but we have Jesus, too.

What are we going to do with our wealth? It is like a continent compared with their parish. If that is what man did when they had a parish, what must we do with a continent?—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in a Recent Sermon.

The Two Living Points in Today's Narrative. First, when a nation loses its Bible the door is opened to all disorder, socially and religiously. The story of Judah under the two reigns preceding that of Josiah is evidence of this in the Bible itself. But the evidence is abundant all along the line of history. When the Divine law and standard for life have been lost or forgotten, then ignorance, idolatry, social injustice, oppression of women and children, and the like, have always flourished. It is not the less true of our own time. Our present troubles are wholly due to the neglect of the law of God. A hundred nearer reasons may be advanced, but this is the mother reason, and it must be faced before there can be any improvement.

The second point is that the recovery of the Word of God in the life of a people is inevitably followed, not only by a revival of pure religion, but by revival of the great things in human life. The story of Josiah's reformation shows that when men go to the roots, there is restored honor in business, hon-

esty in dealing with money, the revival of liberality, and chiefly the revival of the worship of God.—Editorial in The Christian.

The Effect of a Re-discovery of the Bible. Great moral and spiritual movements usually begin with a re-discovery of the Bible. It was distinctly the case with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The finding by Luther of the Bible in the convent library was the origin of the mighty revolution he effected. The Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century commenced by Oxford students meeting for the study of the Scriptures. Many striking parallels may be found. And is it not so with the individual life! Sincere men, in whom the spiritual consciousness has by some means been awakened, go to the Bible to find it a new book, so new that it seems as if it had just been let down from heaven. It suits, it delights the inner sense as the light of the sun the eye, and we rejoice as those who no longer walk in darkness. When the spiritual life in a man is found to be dying down let him go back to the Bible; a re-discovery of its deep and marvellous truths will vitalize, animate, transform, transfigure.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

The Convictions of Great Men about the Authority and Influence of the Bible. We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy. I find more sure marks of authority in the Bible than in any profane history whatever.—Isaac Newton.

Any individual or any institution that could take the Bible to every home in this country would do more for the country than all the armies from the beginning of our history to the present time.—Chief Justice Brewer.

The only hope of human progress is suspended on the ever growing influence of the Bible.—William H. Seward.

All that I have taught of art, everything that I have written, every greatness that there has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life, has been simply due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible, and daily made me learn a part of it by heart.—John Ruskin.

Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties; write its precepts in your hearts and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all progress made in our true civilization and to this we must look for our guide in the future.—General Grant.

In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being, and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit.—Coleridge.

It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.—George Washington.

The Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All things most desirable for man's welfare here and hereafter are to be found portrayed in it.—Abraham Lincoln.

For Discussion. 1. The Book of Deuteronomy. See Bible Dictionaries.

2. The Bible, have we lost it? A reliable authority states that there are between eight and ten million homes in the United States without a Bible. Another authority believes that two-thirds or even three-fourths of the membership of the Christian Church do not open a Bible oftener than once a month. Are these things true? Is the Book "Immortal in our libraries but dead in our lives"?

3. "From the days of Josiah and Nehemiah, of Savonarola, Wycliffe and Luther, right on to our own revivals, the opening of a closed Bible has been followed inevitably by a time of progress and liberation, while we have seen in Germany what are the results of closing an open Bible."—P. Whitwell Wilson.

4. The Sunday-school is the world's greatest institution for popularizing the world's greatest Book.—Gladstone.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Jeremiah born, and in whose reigns did he prophesy? (Jer. 1.1-3). 2. When was the prophecy of this lesson uttered? (Verse 1). 3. Why were the priests so angry? 4. How was Jeremiah treated? 5. What fate befell Uriah who prophesied just as Jeremiah did? (Jer. 26.20-24). 6. What was the law in

Dt. 18.20 regarding a false prophet? 7. On what were the people relying, as told in Jer. 7.4? 8. What was the chief charge against Jeremiah? 9. What similar charge was made against Stephen? (Acts 6.13,14). 10. How do you bear criticism? 11. How do you give criticism? 12. How do you regard civic wrongs? 13. What do you do about them?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW TO MAKE THE BIBLE OUR OWN

Beginning the Lesson. Edward VI was only ten years of age when he became king of England, and but sixteen when he died. Prince Albert had carved a marble statue of the young king with his scepter resting on a Bible, and beneath the Bible these words inscribed, "While he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his father." These were the words which the Chronicler used about the king of our lesson. Who was he? How old was he when he began to reign? Find and read 2 Ch. 34.1-9.

Lost and Found Bibles. Adoniram Judson, the American missionary in Burma, had translated the Bible into the Burmese language when war was waged between Burma and England, and he was put in prison suspected of being a spy for England. His sufferings were terrible, for he was bound for nineteen months with three sets of fetters (part of the time with five), and confined in a loathsome cell. Mrs. Judson, knowing that the precious manuscript would be found and seized in her home, at first buried it, and then fearing that it would decay if left longer in the ground, she wrapped it about with cotton and made it into a pillow for her husband in his cell. Once the pillow was stolen by the soldiers but Mrs. Judson redeemed it by giving them a better one. Then one night Dr. Judson was hurried off to a distant prison and his pillow was thrown out into the prison yard. There one of his faithful converts found it and took it home, because it had belonged to his loved teacher.

Dr. Judson mourned for his lost Bible, but long afterwards to his great joy he found it uninjured in the house of his convert. Is it not wonderful that this book was saved? Dr. Judson lived to see thousands reading it and keeping its laws. The earliest account of a lost and found Bible (Book of the Law) is given in both Second Chronicles and Second Kings. It was in the time of Josiah that the book was found. Text Explained.

The Open Bible in Our Land. Two years ago we celebrated the three hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. The Pilgrims came in search of freedom of worship. The compact drawn in the cabin of the Mayflower opened with the words, "In the name of God, Amen." Their emblem was the open Bible. They came to these shores with this book in order that they might have liberty to read its message and to practice its teachings.

The national monument to the forefathers, the largest and finest piece of granite statuary in the world, typifies the spirit of those rugged pioneers. On the main pedestal stands the figure of Faith. In her left hand she holds a Bible and with her right hand she points toward heaven.

This book of the Pilgrims is in reality the book of the ages. It had through many years of darkness and ecclesiasticism lost something of its significance as a popular book. But its place in the world has never been really lost, and these valiant men came to a new continent and built a new nation based upon the principles laid down in this oldest, greatest, and best of all books. The influence of the Bible on all the institutions of our republic is apparent to any student. The founders of the new nation were men who had been brought up under the influence of the Scriptures' sacred teachings. The great documents of the Republic are permeated with the spirit of justice and righteousness so conspicuous as the Bible's central message.

Ever since the Pilgrims came to these shores the Bible has remained an open book for the people of America. Its value in the nation's life was so thoroughly recognized that in 1777, when Bibles could not be printed in this country for lack of suitable paper and of sufficient type, the Congress of the United States voted to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland. At a later period Bible societies were organized throughout the entire country, and as the population spread westward these enterprising organizations pressed forward with the new tides of immigration so that the open book was always found on the frontiers.

In 1816 the American Bible Society was organized, and has during the century developed into one of the most potent missionary forces of the Christian church. It has supplied the Christian Scriptures by the millions not only to our own people but to the vast numbers of immigrants who have in recent years poured into the country from all parts of the world.

The American Bible Society together with the other national Bible societies of the world have also made the Bible an open book for the peoples of every tongue and tribe and kindred and nation. The Bible has been translated into more than six hundred languages and dialects, and there is probably no tribe nor nation in all the world whose language has been reduced to writing who has not had some part of the Christian Scriptures made available to them.—Condensed from The Church School.

How to Make the Bible Our Own. The Bible is not a thing to be worshipped. A savage might bow down to a telescope, but an astronomer knows better. The way to know it is to use it. It is not to be looked at, but to be looked through. To bind a Bible beautifully, to lift it reverently, to speak of it with admiration, to guard it with all care, is not all to the point. Look through it. Find God with it. See what God was to the men of the Bible, and then let him be the same to you. See the proofs of his power, and prove that power for yourself in yourself. Search the Scriptures for the testimony of Jesus, and honor them by being an honor to the One they reveal.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Search the Bible. Merely reading the Bible is not what God wants. If a friend were to see me searching about a building and were to say, "Moody, what are you looking for?" and I answered, "I am not looking for anything in particular," I fancy he would think me very foolish. But if I were to say, "I have lost a dollar," then I might expect him to help me find it. Read the Bible as if you were seeking for something of value.—Moody.

Where is Your Bible? Is it true that for the majority of people the Bible, like that Book of the Law, might just as well be hidden in some dust-heap? In a Christian home a mother asked her son, a young man and a church member, where his Bible was. "I don't know, mother," he replied, "but I guess it is in my trunk upstairs." The mother then turned to her daughter and said, "And where is yours, Mary?" "Well, really, mother," the daughter said with embarrassment, "I can't tell you; I think it must be on one of my shelves." Where is *your* Bible?

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The Bible is the best gift God has given to man.—Abraham Lincoln.

Young man, my advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures—this is your certain interest.—Franklin.

No man can be considered a truly educated man who is ignorant of the Bible.—President Schurman.

When thou readest what here is writ
Let thy best practice second it;
So twice each precept read shall be,
First in ye booke and nexte in thee.
—Inscription in an Old Bible.

To use books aright is to go to them for help.—Ruskin.

Thy word have I laid up in my heart,
That I might not sin against thee.
I will delight myself in thy statutes:
I will not forget thy word.
The word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path.—Ps. 119.11,16,105.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VIII. Hilkiah's Great Discovery.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Josiah's reign end? 2. What king followed Josiah? 3. Who was king at the time of this prophecy of Jeremiah? (26.1). 4. What was the law in regard to a false prophet, one who spoke not according to God's will, as recorded in Dt. 18? 5. What words in the lesson recall the words of the high priest and Sanhedrin at the trial of Jesus? (Mt. 26). 6. How do you feel when some one tells you your faults? 7. What effect has the telling upon your conduct? 8. Does it make a difference how you are warned of faults? 9. What should be your attitude toward wrong?

JEREMIAH SPEAKS BOLDLY FOR GOD

Golden Text

Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah. Jeremiah 26.13

LESSON Jeremiah 26 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.13-22

REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Samuel 12.1-14; 1 Kings 21.17-24; Jeremiah 7.1-15; Amos 6.1-8

JEREMIAH 26.8 And it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. 9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people were gathered unto Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah.

10 And when the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house unto the house of Jehovah; and they sat in the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's *house.* 11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears. 12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. 13 Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. 14 But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes. 15 Only know ye for certain that, if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth Jehovah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Jehovah our God.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JEREMIAH'S WARNING TO THE CITIES OF JUDAH, verses 1-7.

II. JEREMIAH ON TRIAL FOR HIS LIFE, verses 8-11. "He who speaks the truth should stand with one foot in the stirrup," says a Spanish proverb. Jeremiah had been boldly declaring the truth (see The Historical Background) and *it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.* The *prophets* were false prophets (Jer. 23.16,17; 28.11-17), the flatterers who surrounded the king. The law recorded in Dt. 18.20 was that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon a prophet who spoke what God had not commanded, and they thus declared Jeremiah to be a false prophet. Their proof was their belief that they were the chosen people of God, and that God *could* not destroy their nation as Jeremiah had declared he would. "Jeremiah's prosecutors probably relied on the fact that they, by virtue of their official position as priests and prophets, were entitled to an opinion as experts upon the question as to whether or not any particular person was lawfully speaking as a prophet; in other words, that they were the judges of the qualifications of the members of their class" (D. W. Amram).

Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, This house (the temple) *shall be like Shiloh* (destroyed), *and this city* (Jerusalem) *shall be desolate, without inhabitants?* Shiloh was once a sacred place, the abode of the ark, but now it was fallen into ruin: see Jer. 7.12; 25.11. "Had Jeremiah's address been delivered to the people generally, without containing, as it did, a denunciation of the official classes, namely, the priests and prophets, it probably

would have passed without official recognition. It was not an uncommon thing for a zealous man to address the people in the name of God for the purpose of correcting wrongs both in public and also in private life, but in this case the priests and the prophets felt that they were personally attacked. The priests felt aggrieved because Jeremiah called down the wrath of God upon the temple, and with its fall their official functions would necessarily cease. The priests felt aggrieved because by implication he contrasted the prophets who were sent by God to admonish the people with those who were not prophets of Jehovah but seekers of popularity: who, instead of correcting wrongs, countenanced them and even declared that they existed by the will of God" (D. W. Amram).

Report of the excitement reached the ears of the *princes of Judah* in the *king's house,* where they were doubtless conducting affairs of state. "In Jerusalem there was around the kings of Judah, as around the later foreign governors, a large number of civil officials and servants. To give an idea of their number it is enough to mention the high officials named in the ancient court of Judah, the Servant of the King, the Scribe or Secretary, the Recorder or Remembrancer, the Chief of the Palace or Steward, all of them with their households resident in Jerusalem. To these must be added the other *sarim* or nobles who attended the court; several of lesser rank, the *mashkeh* or cupbearer, the keepers of the treasures and of the robes; the *serisim,* probably but not certainly, eunuchs; and a crowd of minor officials, *sotcrim* and *sopherim,* clerks and secretaries, and so forth. Many of the nobles had their own country estates, the income of which they would draw to the capital. But below them there were large numbers of officials who, as much as the mercenary soldiers, had to be sustained by the state" (George Adam Smith).

These princes came *and sat* in judgment *in the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's house.* "Probably the gate leading into the upper, or inner, court built about a century before by Jotham, 2 K. 15.35" (Driver). *Then spake the priests and the prophets unto all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death* (recall Mt. 26.66); *for he hath prophesied against this city* (compare Acts 6.11-14).

III. JEREMIAH'S DEFENSE AND WARNING, verses 12-15. Jeremiah's defense was that his message had come to him from God, and he urged them to *amend their ways and doings and obey the voice of Jehovah your God.* If you will do this, *Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.* "We learn from this that all prophecy was regarded as conditional, and that the events predicted might be arrested by timely repentance" (Farrar). As for himself, they might do with him as they pleased, continued Jeremiah; *only,* he solemnly reminded them, *if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves* (see Prov. 6.16,17); *for of a truth God hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.*

IV. JEREMIAH'S ACQUITTAL, verse 16. The princes and all the people pronounced Jeremiah not guilty upon the evidence of his own words.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They sat in the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's house, verse 10. Courts of justice were held at the gate of a city, where people naturally congregated. Because of this custom, the word gate became a synonym for *power,* as in Mt. 16.8. Compare our use of the word *bench,* for the persons who sit as judges, the court. In Jerusalem the court was held at the temple gate.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What prophets warned the Kingdom of Israel of punishment for sins? What were the sins of the Northern Kingdom? For what reform measures is Elijah famed? Elisha? Isaiah? Amos?

From Josiah to Jehoiakim. Josiah ruled for thirteen years after the finding of the Book of the Law. Then Necho, Pharaoh of Egypt, started forth on a career of conquest and was met on the Plain of Esdraelon by Josiah. In the battle of Megiddo Josiah was defeated and slain, 608 B.C. It was not now a question of independence, but of choice between two foreign sovereigns, Egypt or Assyria. For three years Judah remained a vassal of Necho. Shallum, Josiah's second son, was made king under the new name of Jehoahaz. In three months he was carried off captive to the conqueror's camp at Hamath, and was

the first king of Judah to die in exile. Necho then placed Josiah's older son Eliakim on the throne. Eliakim took the name of Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim and the Prophets Urijah and Jeremiah. "For a few years a temporary splendor remained, combined with the restoration of old heathen rites. The king himself, by enforced labor, enlarged his palace, roofed it with cedar, painted it with vermilion, as if the evil day was still far off, and he could rest securely under the protection of the Egyptian power, whose heavy tribute he exacted from his unwilling subjects. In the recollections of his countrymen he remained fixed as the last example of those cruel, selfish, luxurious princes, the natural product of oriental monarchies, the disgrace of the monarchy of David.

"In the last decline of the state there were prophets to bear witness to higher truths. Urijah, at the very beginning of the reign, by his energetic remonstrances, probably against the Egyptian Alliance, provoked such a fierce reaction of king and nobles and army, that he had to flee for safety even into Egypt itself. He was pursued and brought back to Jerusalem, where he was beheaded, and his corpse excluded from the cemetery."

But the chief monitor was Jeremiah. In the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah attacked the priests and the people alike for their blind reliance upon the inviolableness of the temple, which he threatened with ruin like that which befell the old sanctuary at Shiloh, and he laid bare the shallowness of the religious revival which had thriven as long as king Josiah's strong hand ruled, and now was proving a religion of the letter but not of the spirit. Speaking in the name of the Lord, Jeremiah said: "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Beautifully expressed is his lesson derived from the work of the potter: "I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he was making a work on the wheels. And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." The Divine potter might re-fashion his chosen people. The conscience of the people was aroused and they followed the prophet in a grand public demonstration, in which the symbol of the potter's bottle was carried to the Valley of Slaughter and broken in sight of the people.

Jeremiah could not speak thus boldly without endangering his life. At some great feast, doubtless, when the people were assembled at Jerusalem, the prophet uttered the warning narrated in our lesson.

The Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is seemingly the most human of all the authors of the prophetical books of the Bible. We understand his life and character because in his book he has unconsciously revealed himself, has frankly let us see the workings of his mind and heart.

He was Jehovah's spokesman in dark and disastrous days. His public ministry lasted through the reigns of Josiah (after the thirteenth year), Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah—a period of over forty years. Those were eventful times. He knew of the invading Scythians in 626 B. C., the reform measure of Josiah in 620, Josiah's defeat and death on the field of Migiddo in 608, the fall of Nineveh and the end of the Assyrian Empire in 607, the rise of Babylon, the conquest of Judah in 597, the capture of Jerusalem in 586. As he saw the long night of exile settling down upon his nation, his prophetic sight went farther, and he beheld a new city arising out of the ruins of Jerusalem, a new covenant taking the place of the old.

How his book was written we gain a glimpse in our next lesson. It is the longest of the prophetical writings. The sermons are not chronologically arranged, but are grouped according to theme. Their general tenor is that of stern denunciation, and to a careless reader the sense of gloom is most striking. But, as Professor Kent points out, his messages to be appreciated must be felt as well as grasped intellectually. The wider and deeper the spiritual experience of the reader, the greater the understanding and the appreciation of the prophet's thought.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The princes of Judah came up from the king's house into the house of Jehovah. The king's house was below the temple court on the south, separated from it by a wall with an entrance gate.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Throughout these weeks you have tried to make the lesson of such immediate interest that it will be applied to the daily happenings observed or experienced by your pupils. Your pupils are gaining two ideals of life. One of them is built up by their experiences throughout the week. The other is built up by imagination and judgment on Sunday. Your success as a Christian teacher depends upon how well the two ideals of life which your pupils are building, harmonize. Unless the Sunday vision stands always in consciousness as an outline to be harmoniously filled through the experiences of life, your pupils will be persons of two standards. Insist, therefore, upon constant applications to concrete work-a-day examples, and especially stress frequent applications to self. Be bold like Jeremiah, if you are certain of your facts, but remember also that you are a teacher, not a preacher, and as teacher it is your privilege to help your pupils acquire a little of the spirit of Jeremiah.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
WHEN AND HOW SHOULD WRONG BE REBUKED?

Beginning the Lesson. After making the historical connection of the lesson clear, bring the scene which immediately precedes our printed text, verses 1-7, vividly before your pupils. By questions and answers draw a comparison between that scene and the corresponding modern one. These words of the Rev. W. H. Bennett in the Expositor's Bible will prove helpful: "Jeremiah's audience consisted of worshippers on the way to the temple, and would correspond to an ordinary congregation of churchgoers. As an acknowledged prophet, he was well within his rights in expecting a hearing from the attendants at the feast, and men would be curious to see and hear one who had been the dominant influence in Judah during the reign of Josiah. Moreover, in the absence of evening newspapers and shop-windows, a prophet was too exciting a distraction to be lightly neglected. From Jehovah's charge to speak all that he had commanded him to speak and not to keep back a word, we may assume that Jeremiah's discourse was long: it was also avowedly an old sermon; most of his audience had heard it all before, all of them were quite familiar with its main topics. They listened in the various moods of a modern congregation 'sitting under' a distinguished preacher. Jeremiah's friends and disciples welcomed the ideas and phrases that had become a part of their spiritual life. Many enjoyed the speaker's earnestness and eloquence, without troubling themselves about the ideas at all. There was nothing especially startling about the well-known threats and warnings; they had become 'A tale of little meaning though the words were strong.' Men hardened their hearts against inspired prophets as easily as they do against the most pathetic appeals of modern evangelists. Mingled with the crowd were Jeremiah's professional rivals, who detested both him and his teaching—priests who regarded him as a traitor to his own caste, prophets who envied his superior gifts and his force of passionate feeling. He was allowed to finish what he had to say, but in his peroration he had insisted on a subject that stung the indifferent into resentment and roused the priests and prophets to fury."

Proclaiming Unpleasant Truths. Truth is always unpleasant to those who are enamored of false ideals and evil customs, and who do not desire to correct their ignorance by comparison with the perfection of God. Like Jeremiah, the preacher and the missionary are often called upon to proclaim unpleasant truths, and men's characters are shown by their attitude toward the revelation. It is an unpleasant truth that heathen religions are dying and their faiths are founded on falsehood. It is an unwelcome fact to multitudes that non-Christian standards of morality are ruinous to true happiness and progress. Many church members do not like to be told that their pride and extravagance are displeasing to God, and that insincerity and selfishness are sins. Even Christians often rebel at the suggestion that they are disloyal in failing to help forward missionary work, and that they are responsible for keeping their sons and daughters out of Christian life and service.—Unknown.

Rebuking a Nation's Wrong Dealing. When Lord Chatham urged England not to make war on the United States, he was howled down by the false patriots of the day. But history stamps him as the true patriot, his opponents as the false ones. When John Bright spoke against the folly of the Crimean

War, he was made the butt of newspaper gibes, and nine-tenths of his countrymen laughed at him or sneered at him. But history shows that John Bright was right. He was the true patriot. The false patriot holds that you must never criticise your country's dealings with other lands.

Perhaps the hardest duty that ever falls on a man who loves his country is to point out that his country is doing wrong. That heavy duty fell often to the lot of Jeremiah. The princes, who had no real faith in God, naturally thought Jeremiah's action unpardonable. Disbelieving in God, disbelieving in religion, disbelieving in Jeremiah's prophecies, no wonder they said, "This man seeketh not the welfare of the people, but their hurt." Of course the false patriots of Jerusalem sneered at him, called him a Little Palestiner, said he was in the pay of the Chaldeans, just as in the past men who value England's fair name and honor even more than addition to her Empire have been slandered by the scribes and Pharisees of an unchristian Press.—F. W. Aveling.

The Kind of Men who are Needed. The golden hopes of mankind can be realized only by men who have iron in their blood; by men who scorn to do wrong and equally scorn to submit to wrong; by men of gentle souls whose hearts are harder than steel in their readiness to war against brutality and evil.—Theodore Roosevelt.

Judah and Germany. Jeremiah saw that resistance to Babylon's power was hopeless, suicidal. He counseled submission as the only wise course. He believed that back of the Chaldean invasion was God, that it was God's method of punishing his people for their sins. Of course Jeremiah was unpopular. Few people take rebuke of themselves kindly, and profit from it; fewer still are willing to listen to the prophet who tells them that there is no hope for their nation, that it must reap what it has sowed.

Suppose that during the War a prophet had arisen in Germany and proclaimed that the nation was wholly in the wrong, that she was responsible for the war, that she had broken her word, had carried on the war after the manner of barbarians, that she deserved to be conquered and would be conquered because of her guilt. Would such a prophet have been popular? Prince Lichnowsky was patriotic enough to warn his country against her fatal course, but he was also wise enough to take refuge in Switzerland before he published his views. Suppose that now, a few years after the armistice, a German prophet should arise, and counsel the people to acknowledge the terrible wrong she has done, and in penitence to carry out the uttermost letter of the peace terms: would he be popular? These reflections let us see the position of Jeremiah the righteous prophet in the days of Judah's unrighteousness.

The Fate of Great Men who have Rebuked Wrong. The words of an ancient monarch—*Imperium occanum esse malorum*, To reign is to be plunged into an ocean of trouble—apply to any position of trust whether in statesmanship or in religion. "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil," said King Ahab of Micaiah, the fearless prophet who would not compromise with truth. "I have wearied myself all the days of my life to make known to thee the truths of the faith and of holy living," said Savonarola to his loved city of Florence, "and I have had nothing but tribulations, derision and reproach." The world is a hard place for the Micaiahs who tell evil-doers of their sins, tribulation and even imprisonment have always been their portion.

Jeremiah's whole life was one of martyrdom. So bitter was the hatred against him that his fellow-townsmen of Anathoth sought to murder him (11.19-23); his own family treated him treacherously (12.6); the priests thrust him into the stocks for profaning, as they claimed, the temple court by his prophecies of destruction (20.1,2); and often he seems to have been held up by a mob who clamored for his blood. Standing as he did almost alone, "a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth," exceedingly sensitive as he was by nature to the treatment received from friends and foes, he nevertheless endured the burden that might well have crushed the strongest spirit, for stronger than all persecution from without was the impelling force from within. He could not be unfaithful to his mission. "If I say I will not make mention of Jehovah nor speak any more in his name," he says, "then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing and I cannot contain." The prophet's burden was lightened by the prophet's consciousness of his Lord's approval.

Giving Rebuke. When, like Jeremiah, you feel it your duty to admonish

others, how do you do it? Do you feel "bumptious" about it? Like Jonah, do you *want* the retribution to follow which you prophesy? Or do you feel as did Jeremiah? He who thinks himself called on to admonish others should recall Matthew 7.1-5, and then pray for wisdom and forcefulness and tenderness in speaking.

Receiving Rebuke. "This man is worthy of death; *for he hath prophesied against this city,* as ye have heard with your ears." If Shakespeare had written this sentence, it would be cited as proof of his wonderful knowledge of the human heart. Notice the *proof* offered—"he hath prophesied against this city,"—the implication being that everybody knows *this city is all right.* And this was suggested so as to inflame the feeling of the populace against the prophet and, lest their reason might step in and remark, "But really, there *may* be something in what he says," they were at once diverted to the consideration of proof. Proof that the city is all right? By no means. *Proof that he prophesied as reported*—"as ye have heard."

Watch the newspapers for similar examples. Here is a police commissioner accused by certain papers of keeping a wide open town. He says that his critics are "false prophets and muck-rakers." "Other cities," he declares, "have newspapers that boost the home town. Our newspapers give space to those that knock it."

And how do you receive admonition? Few are the friends who love you well enough to tell you your faults, and fewer still those who have wisdom and tact in the telling. But one who is angry with you will declare them, if with exaggeration, yet with sincerity; and if you really want to improve you will hear the case like an unbiased jury and, taking advantage of the light thus thrown on your conduct, you will reform.

The Reprimand. Eleanor Graves had made a slight error in an important report she had copied. It brought a sharp reprimand from her employer, Mr. Troy. It was the second time, he reminded her, that she had made that blunder. At the reproof the girl's face flushed painfully and then paled.

"If my work isn't satisfactory, you would better find some one who can do it better," she said.

Whirling round in his swivel chair, Mr. Troy looked at her. He had really never noticed his latest stenographer before, but now his keen eyes saw many things that showed that she came from a home where she had been petted and cared for.

"How long have you been at work?" he asked.

"This is my first position," Eleanor answered.

Mr. Troy nodded. "I understand. Now, Miss Graves, let me tell you something. You have many of the qualities of a good business woman; you are punctual, you are not afraid of work, you are fairly accurate. I have an idea that you take pride in turning out a good piece of work. But you must learn to stand criticism and profit by it. We must all take it some time—every one of us. A weakling goes under. A strong man or woman learns to value it, to make every bit of it count. That is what I hope you will do."

Eleanor braced herself to meet his eyes.

"If you'll let me—I'll try again," she said.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Jeremiah, the Prophet of the Inner Life. See Chapter VIII of Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Dr. Robert W. Rogers.

2. Jeremiah's Experiences at the hands of his fellow-townsmen. See pages 245-247 of The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, by Professor Kent.

3. Trials for Heresy.

4. The minister is sometimes more popular when he talks about sinners among the Jews than when he talks of sinners in the pews.—John Andrew Holmes.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What other pettish king have we heard about this year? 2. Has human nature changed and is pettishness now, as it is popularly supposed to be, a strictly feminine failing? 3. How does Jer. 22.13-19 describe Jehoiakim's character? 4. Who put Jehoiakim upon the throne? 5. What was the danger that threatened Judah at this time? 6. How long had Jeremiah been preaching to Judah? (Jer. 25.3). 7. How did his being "shut up" prove a blessing? 8. What other blessings from imprisonment can you mention? 9. Can truth be de-

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stroyed by burning its written expression? 10. How does our text show us that variations may have arisen in the words of a Bible book? 11. How were the books of the Bible written? 12. Have you a contracting or an expanding Bible?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JEREMIAH SPEAKS BOLDLY FOR GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Some years ago the people of Paris were warned that the River Seine, which flows through their city, would overflow its banks. Men skilled in measuring rivers knew that it was rising rapidly, and they knew that the heavy rains and the melting of an unusually large fall of snow would soon bring an immense amount of water down the river which would tear away bridges and flood the city. The French people made fun of their prophecies. As they crossed the bridges they called out gaily to one another, "Look out, or you will get your feet wet." But the flood came. It destroyed property valued at millions of dollars, made thousands of people homeless, and caused very great suffering.

We have today a lesson about a great prophet of Judah who warned the people of a disaster that was coming to them. Who was the prophet, and what was his warning? How was his warning received? Text Explained.

Fear God and No One Else. It was in the year 1745, when Cornwall was like a pandemonium in bitter opposition to John Wesley. It was in the town of Falmouth, and a howling mob filled the streets trying to find the evangelist, determined to kill him. He, in a house in the town, was deserted by all his friends except a young girl—a servant girl, I imagine—whom he calls "poor Kitty"; and in the room they heard the mob in the street, the fierce yells, and they heard the mob break into the house and into the adjoining room. There was only a thin partition of wood between the room and the one in which Wesley and the girl were, and the mob was battering at that partition. Wesley quietly took down from the partition a mirror lest it should be broken, and then the trembling girl said: "Oh, sir, what must we do?" "I said, 'We must pray!' Our lives were not worth an hour's purchase. 'Is it not better to hide?' said the poor girl; 'would it not be better for you to get here into the closet?' 'No,' said I, 'it is best for me to stand just where I am.'" Now, you will remember that John Wesley, although he was an heroic soul, was a very little body—one of the shortest and apparently feeblest of men, and he counted it better, after praying, to stand just where he was. The mob was soon joined by a number of privateers who came up from the harbor, and were ready enough to join in the chase, and indignant with the people for making so long a business of it. Wesley heard them rush into the neighboring room, and with a cry, "Avast, lads, avast," thrust themselves against the whole partition, and the whole partition fell down, and the howling mob was in the room before him. Then John Wesley said quietly to them: "Here I am; which one of you has anything to say against me?" and so appalled were they by the quiet courage of the little man, that without knowing what they did, they made way, and Wesley quietly walked through them all into the street, and there in the street, with the mob howling round him, he began quietly to preach, and as he preached the crowd was anxious to hear; and presently the very leaders of the mob—the captains of it, as he calls them—gathered round him and shouted out: "Not a man shall touch him; let him speak." And there he delivered his message, and quietly passed through them to the harbor, where he took boat. And he entered in his journal, "I never saw before the hand of God so plainly shown as here." That man feared God, and he feared nothing else in the world.—Dr. R. F. Horton.

A Bold Speaker for God. There were multitudes in Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century who were shocked at the scandalous sale of indulgences, but there was only one, Luther, the monk of Erfurt, who dared to rebuke the Romish Church. The poor monk had reason to fear the powerful Duke George, yet he said: "If I had duty to do in Leipsic, I would ride through the city though it rained Duke Georges."

The Luther monument at Worms is one of the most impressive monuments in Europe. Luther stands superbly wrought in stone, "fittingly surrounded by four kindred souls, fellow-battlers all, and two of them martyrs to the cause

of religious liberty and reformation, Huss, Wycliffe, Waldo, Savonarola, a glorious company of the saints. With head erect and defiant and with soul unafraid, Luther is pictured uttering his memorable words, spoken by him at the Diet of Worms, nearly four hundred years ago: *Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mir,* Amen. Here I take my stand. I can not otherwise. So help me God, Amen.

"That which he knew, he uttered,
Conviction made him strong;
And with undaunted courage
He faced and fought the wrong.
No power on earth could silence him
Whom love and faith made brave;
And though four hundred years have gone
Men strew with flowers his grave."

Moral Cowards. A Fiji chief, according to Bagehot, was one day going over a mountain path followed by a long line of people, when he happened to stumble and fall. All the rest of the people immediately stumbled and fell also, all save one man, whom the others at once attacked, demanding to know why he considered himself better than his chief. Those who have no manly independence of their own are wont to berate the one who, like this Fiji savage, has the courage of his convictions.

It is said that a timid court preacher when preaching before Louis XVI made the declaration that "All men must die." Whereupon the king frowned, and the affrighted preacher stammered out, "I—I—mean almost all, your majesty."

In one of our cities a meeting of citizens was called to protest against a great public wrong. One prominent man after another was asked to act as Vice-president of the meeting and refused, saying that he would like to do so, that his heart was with the movement, but on account of his business relations he dared not. What do you think of such men?

A Fearless Youth. When Wu Ting Fang was Chinese Minister to the United States, his little son, Chow Chu, attended a public school in Washington. One of the boy's teachers tells this story.

One day an American boy, the son of a prominent statesman, on coming in at the end of the noon recess said to me, "I like that little chinky wink." "Why?" said I. "Because," said he, "that Chow stands up for the under dog when he is right, even if the under dog isn't much, and he isn't one mite afraid to do it, either."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The sands are running out in the time-glass of God's judgments.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

You have no business with consequences. You are to tell the truth.—Johnson.

Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge;
But he that hateth reproof is brutish.—Proverbs 12.1.

Live pure, speak truth, right wrong,
Else wherefore born?—Tennyson.

Meekness has its uses, but meekness may easily drift into mere cowardice, into connivance with evil, into complaisance toward wrong.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. IX. The Patriotism of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. The Hebrew year began with our month April: when was the ninth month? 2. How were oriental houses heated in cold weather? 3. What did the book written by Baruch look like? 4. How many times was the roll read, and what was the effect of each reading? 5. Contrast the effect of the reading of the Book of the Law upon Josiah with the effect of the reading of Jeremiah's words upon Jehoiakim. 6. What did the king expect to accomplish by burning the book? 7. Can the Word of God ever be destroyed? 8. What did Jesus say about the indestructibleness of his words? (Mt. 24.35). 9. What do you think of Jehoiakim and his act? 10. What do you think of the men about him who did not disapprove of what he did? 11. What befell Jehoiakim after this? (2 K. 24.1-6; 2 Ch. 36.6-8). 12 Why didn't Jeremiah have his prophecies printed? 13. Why was not Jeremiah discouraged when the book he had so laboriously dictated was burned?

JEHOIAKIM TRIES TO DESTROY GOD'S WORD

Golden Text

The word of our God shall stand forever. Isaiah 40.8

LESSON Jeremiah 36 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 40.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Isaiah 55.8-11; Matthew 5.17-19

JEREMIAH 36.4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. 5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of Jehovah: 6 therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of Jehovah in the ears of the people in Jehovah's house upon the fast-day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. 7 It may be they will present their supplication before Jehovah, and will return every one from his evil way; for great is the anger and the wrath that Jehovah hath pronounced against this people. 8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of Jehovah in Jehovah's house.

20 And they went in to the king into the court; but they had laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; and they told all the words in the ears of the king. 21 So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll; and he took it out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood beside the king. 22 Now the king was sitting in the winter-house in the ninth month: and *there was a fire in* the brazier burning before him. 23 And it came to pass, when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, that *the king* cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was in the brazier, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier. 24 And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

32 Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. MAKING THE ROLL, verses 1-4. In these verses we see how Jeremiah came to write the messages which he had been delivering in Judah during the twenty odd years of his ministry. "Jeremiah was one of the great prophetic souls who walked so close to God that he recognized in every conviction which came to him the promptings of the Divine voice. Accordingly, as a God-given task, he set to work to put in written form the sermons which he had uttered during the past two decades. His object was to appeal directly to the consciences of the rulers and people" (Kent). It was in *the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah,* that Jeremiah committed his sermons to writing in order to give the nation another chance, that God might *forgive their iniquity and their sin.* He dictated his messages, and Baruch the scribe wrote them upon *a roll of a book.*

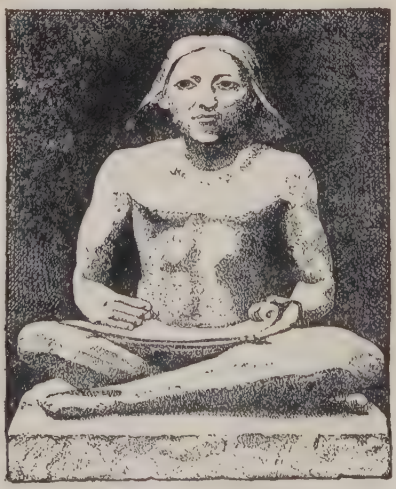
II. READING THE ROLL TO THE PEOPLE, verses 5-10. The writing of the prophecies took considerable time, and some months later Jeremiah bade Baruch take the roll and read it to the people in the temple *upon the fast day.* Jeremiah himself could not do this because he was *shut up:* exactly what this means we do not know. He was not imprisoned (see verse 19); it may be that he was in such popular disfavor because of his words of warning, that he would have suffered harm had he appeared in the temple courts; or the king may have ordered him to cease from preaching. The special fast may have been on ac-

count of a threatened or an actual attack upon Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's army. Baruch obeyed.

III. READING THE ROLL TO THE PRINCES, verses 11-19. The burden of Jeremiah's message was that Jerusalem must fall and the people he carried off into exile unless they repented and besought God's mercy. The people seem to have listened to it in silence, but Micaiah was so deeply impressed that he went to the scribe's chamber in the palace where the princes were assembled and told them about it. They were aroused and at once sent Jehudi to bring Baruch and his roll to their council chamber. On his arrival they said, *Sit down now, and read it in our ears.* Fear seized them as they heard the solemn words of warning, and they resolved to inform the king. First, however, Baruch was directed to go and hide himself and Jeremiah from the king's wrath.

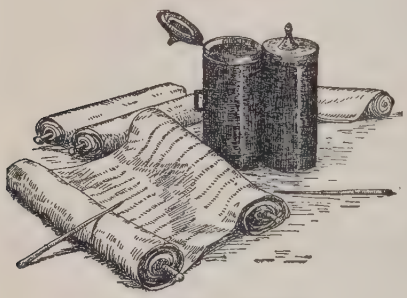
IV. READING THE ROLL TO THE KING, verses 20,21. The princes crossed the court and entered the private apartments of king Jehoiada, the son of Josiah, who has been called "the ideal of a bad ruler." They told him about Jeremiah's roll, giving him its substance in their own words. The roll itself had been left for safe-keeping *in the chamber of Elishama the scribe.* "In the time of the kings the Hebrew scribes were supported by the state. They were a learned, organized, and influential body of men. They had the care of the law, the sacred rolls of their revealed scriptures. It was their duty to make transcriptions of them, and also to expound them as lawyers or judges, thus serving in a general way as recorders, attorneys, or schoolmasters." The King ordered *Jehudi to fetch the roll* and then to read it to him and the princes about him.

V. DESTROYING THE ROLL, verses 22-25. It was in *the winter-house,* that part of the royal palace which was used in winter time (separate winter and summer houses were unknown), and *in the ninth month,* corresponding to our December, that the reading took place. There was therefore *a fire in the brazier burning before* the King: see Light from Oriental Life. Jehudi had read only three or four leaves when the king in his anger seized his *penknife,* slashed the roll to pieces and cast it into the fire. The roll was made of papyrus or parchment, and the words were written upon it in columns: the Hebrew word here translated *leaves* means literally *columns,* as the marginal rendering of the Bible informs us. "Man is so unwilling to hear anything unpleasant or disagreeable about himself that he gets into a wrong temper before he actually knows what God's object is. Jehoiakim only heard three or four leaves read, and he was so annoyed with the delineation of the wickedness of Israel and Judah, and with the judgments and threatenings of God, that he cut the roll with the penknife and cast it into the fire. Observe that he did not hear the whole roll. Did any man ever destroy the Bible who knew it wholly? Many a man has thrown it into the fire who has heard or read a part only, but I know not that any man who has known the Bible wholly and thoroughly has ever attempted to destroy it" (Joseph Parker). *All the roll was consumed,* but neither the king nor his servants, who *had heard all these words,* were *afraid,* nor *rent their garments* in token of dismay. Contrast the effect which the reading of the Book of the Law had upon King Josiah. "Josiah on that occasion in sorrowful dismay rent his garments; but his son now rents not his garments, but the Roll itself. And thus passed away 'his last chance, his last offer of mercy; and as he threw the torn fragments of the Roll on the fire he threw there in symbol his royal house, his doomed city, the temple, and all the people of the land'" (Cambridge Bible).



Statue of a Scribe, 2200 B.C., in the Cairo Museum

VI. REWRITING THE ROLL, verses 26-32. The king dispatched officers to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but they could not be found. "And thus the king considered the incident closed. But Jeremiah did not consider it closed. He dictated his prophecies to Baruch again and added much to them. And then he sent Jehoiakim a personal message declaring the punishments shortly to be visited upon him. And God did not consider the incident closed with the burning of his word. No incident is closed except in God's own way. The book was rewritten with an appendix of woe, and the king of the penknife which did the burning perished according to the prophet's word" (McFarland). Unto the first edition were added *many like words,* and this second writing forms the nucleus, no doubt, of our Book of Jeremiah. "This shows us how variations may have arisen in a book. Suppose during the first reading some one had been taking a shorthand record, then there would have been in existence two copies of the prophecies of Jeremiah, each by Jeremiah, and yet of necessity differing considerably one from another. In point of fact, the variations in the text of Jeremiah are most extensive and remarkable. The Septuagint (the Greek version made about 200 B. C. in Alexandria) has been derived from a Hebrew manuscript about an eighth shorter than the Hebrew text which we now have" (R. Bruce Taylor).



Ancient Writing Materials

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Baruch wrote all the words upon a roll of a book, verse 4. The ink was a compound of lampblack, soot, or pulverized charcoal prepared with gum and water. It was sold in small particles or grains. When needed for use some of the grains were put into the inkhorn and mixed with water until the mixture became of the consistency of our modern printer's ink. It was an intense glossy black that retained its color for ages, yet was easily obliterated with sponge and water.—James Freeman, in Bible Manners.

The king was sitting in the winter house, verse 22. In common parlance the lower apartments are simply *el beit*—the house; the upper part is the *alliyeh,* which is the summer house. Every respectable dwelling has both. If these are on the same story, then the external and airy apartment is the summer house, and that for winter is the interior and more sheltered room. It is rare to meet a family which has an entirely separate dwelling for summer.—Wm. R. Thompson, in The Land and the Book.

An Oriental Brazier

In the ninth month, verse 22. Though this month corresponds to our December, it is very warm then in Jerusalem in the middle of the day, but quite cold in the evening and early morning.

There was a fire in the brazier, verse 22. In an oriental home there is no furnace, stove, or fire-place. On the coldest days the bottom of the movable brazier is covered with ashes and on it a charcoal fire is started out of doors. When the coals are all aglow, it is brought into the room to heat it. The brazier is a pan of earthenware, iron, brass or copper supported by a tripod. When the fire has burnt down the heat is retained by covering the brazier with a frame over which a carpet is thrown. In some homes there is a depression in the earthen floor where a charcoal or wood fire is started, whose smoke fills the room and escapes through a window.

The king cut it with the penknife, verse 23. The roll was of parchment, not of paper, and could not be torn. The penknife was the "scribe's knife," a long, narrow blade which was used to sharpen a reed pen.

His dead body shall be cast out, verse 30. "To be deprived of burial was considered by the Jews one of the greatest dishonors that could come to one. In this they but showed the common feeling of civilized man."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What man found the Book of the Law in the temple? To what king was it shown? What effect did the reading have upon the king? What did he do?

The Doom which Jeremiah Foretold was rapidly Approaching. Review the history given in our last lesson. For a long time the great power in the East had been Assyria, but towards the end of the seventh century B. C. the great Assyrian lion (Isa. 5.29) was in his death gasps, and a new power from southern Babylonia rapidly gained the ascendency. This power was the Chaldeans, who, though often conquered by Assyrian and Babylonian armies, had finally moved from the lowlands around the head of the Persian Gulf to the lower Euphrates and Tigris rivers. They were united under Nabopolassar, who had seized Babylon, and their nation became known as the *New Babylonian Empire.* Together with the Medes, who dwelt northeast of the Tigris, they attacked and conquered Nineveh, the great capital of the Assyrian Empire, in 607 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, started westward with a large army bent on conquest. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim he defeated Necho, king of Egypt, at the battle of Carchemish (605) by the Euphrates. "With the retreat of Necho, the whole country was left open to the invading army. The whole land trembled. Like a whirlwind, like a torrent, they swept on.

"Once more Jeremiah became the center of interest. What course would he, the prophet of the age, take in the face of this impending calamity? He foresaw, on the one hand, that the immediate pressure of Babylon was irresistible; but, on the other hand, that it could not last. It was not indifference to his country, but attachment to its permanent interests, with the yet larger consequences wrapped up in them, which induced him to counsel submission. The warning words which he had uttered at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign he now repeated with more determined energy as the crisis drew nearer."

It was when he could no longer speak directly to the people that Jeremiah had recourse to writing his message and having it read.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

This lesson is rich in vivid pictures and also in solemn meanings. In classes of Intermediates lead the pupils to tell it in five scenes. Help for doing this is given under the Topic for Intermediates and Seniors. Sketch on the blackboard—or have one of your pupils—the roll of parchment as it looked after Baruch had finished. It was rolled up and tied. Tell the class that similar rolls are used in Jewish synagogues today. The longer books of the Old Testament are upon two rolls, and the rabbi rolls upon the right roller each column of text as he finishes it, for Hebrew is read from right to left. The five smaller books of the Old Testament are upon one roller only. The Esther roll is only seven feet long. As Scene III is told sketch the brazier on the blackboard.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK; OR, HOW TO MEET THE FORCES ANTAGONISTIC TO GOD'S WORD

Beginning the Lesson. If you reprove a person, and he refuses to listen, do you say, "All right, if what I've warned you of comes to pass, *don't blame me!*" If anyone says this to you, do you suspect that he may wish the ill to happen? If you warn a child and he persists in getting into trouble, what do you do? That is what Jeremiah did. He devised another mode of warning, and he did not cease trying to avert what he foresaw.

For some unexplained reason Jeremiah was no longer free to use his old-time method of addressing the people directly. So he turned to another method, that of writing his message, and instead of being the prophet for his own age alone, he became the prophet for all ages.

"It is very wonderful how often, in God's providence, the very event that has seemed to close a career has opened out paths that have made it infinitely more useful." Many instances will at once occur to everyone. Paul was imprisoned, and the result was that the world has his letters to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and to Philemon. Martin Luther was "shut up" by his friends in the castle of the Wartburg to save his life, and there he wrote his translation of the New Testament which made that book accessible to every German peasant. John Bunyan was put in Bedford jail and to that imprisonment we owe The Pilgrim's Progress.

Who aided Jeremiah in the writing of his message? (Follow with the Text Explained.)

Romantic Perils and Escapes of the Book. The enemies of the Christian religion set themselves to the task of destroying the Memorabilia of Jesus. Diocletian ordered a crusade against the Book. The governors in Egypt, Palestine and Ephesus offered rewards for every one who could find a copy, and whatsoever man hid the Book was threatened with the stake. Witness the story of Tischendorf's discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript. Visiting St. Catherine's Convent, at the foot of Mount Sinai, in May of 1844, Tischendorf found in the hall a basketful of old parchments, and the librarian told him that two heaps of similar old documents had been used for the fires. The head of the convent allowed Tischendorf to take away forty sheets of vellum. But the gift evoked such excitement on the part of the scholar that the monks refused to give him any more. Years later Tischendorf enlisted the sympathy of the Emperor of Russia, and on reaching the convent a monk said: "I, too, have read a copy of that Septuagint," and brought forth a bulky bundle wrapped in red cloth and laid it on the table. This time the scholar was wise enough to conceal his joy, and in a careless way asked permission to read it through, and found to his amazement the New Testament complete, with parts of the Old Testament and a portion of the Apocrypha. Through the Czar's influence, Tischendorf obtained the manuscript that is today the world's most precious treasure. It was in the library in Petrograd, but whether today (1920) the Bolshevists, who hate the very name of the Carpenter of Nazareth, have held back destroying hands no man knows.

The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, and the parchment copies of the Four Gospels were burned to ashes; but here and there loyal disciples buried the manuscript in some catacomb, hid the Memorabilia in some stone jar, covered it up with sand, after the fashion of the Washington manuscript found by Charles L. Freer's Egyptian guide in the desert of the Upper Nile. Our books go out of date. Wood paper becomes brittle and passes into dust. Our damp climate fades the ink. But in Egypt and the Far East, where the air is dry, the early disciples, eighteen centuries ago, buried their manuscripts in air-sealed stone jars and hidden tombs, and from time to time a new manuscript is discovered, until today we have fifteen hundred ancient copies in various versions of earth's most fascinating Book.—Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, in a Sermon.

A Glimpse of How the Bible Was Written. Our text shows us the Book of Jeremiah in the making. The prophets preached to their countrymen what they believed to be God's will. Then they, or their scribes, or later writers to whom their words came down, committed their words to writing. When the

prophets were prevented from addressing the people directly, they wrote letters to them (see Jer. 29.1) as did Paul, and these letters became a part of our Bible. The Bible has been a growth.

"Like every other growth, the Bible is the result of a living force underlying it. The Christian consciousness has universally called the force 'inspiration.' The mind of God is its ultimate source, and that is all that the sincere and devout soul needs to be assured of in using the Bible. A different question altogether is that of the growth of the Book as a whole. There are portions of the Bible which originally appeared as fragments independent of one another, and were put together at a later time. Such are, for instance, confessedly, the Books of Psalms and Proverbs. Such may be, also, the Books of the Pentateuch. There are other portions of the Bible which from the beginning were designed and published as we have them now. Such are the Book of the Acts and the Epistles of Paul. A third class of books are those which, though originally independent, may have been used together for one reason or another. Instances of this class are Isaiah and Zechariah. Evidently the questions that are raised by this state of things open a legitimate field for historical and literary research, and their settlement one way or another is a great desideratum from the point of view of the devout lover of the Word of God."

A Force that is Helpful, not Antagonistic, to the Word. The record of this chapter shows us one way in which variations may have crept into the sacred text. (See the comment on verse 32.) It is always to be remembered that there is a human as well as a Divine element in the Bible, and the human element, just because it is human, will show us truth looked at from many different sides, and will also partake of the infirmities of human thought and care. To claim that the whole Bible must be absolutely accurate in every jot and tittle, that all its numbers in Chronicles, for example, must be held to be as truly inspired as is the fifteenth chapter of John—to make such a claim as that is simply to manufacture unbelief. The purpose is to teach the things of the Spirit, not those of the making of a census. It is because of this that the Bible is so modern. Every now and then in reading it one is struck as by a blow by something so bold, so fresh, so utterly true that one is apt to think such teaching cannot proceed from a far bygone age. But the dew of its youth is still upon this inexhaustible Word, for the human heart from one generation to another has to meet the same temptations and needs the same help.—Dr. R. Bruce Taylor, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

An Expanding Bible. The Bible, with its sixty-six books of so many chapters, so many verses, so many words, has remained the same for something like eighteen hundred years. But "your own Bible" may be expected to, ought to, expand indefinitely, just as your own family, town, nation, may be expected to expand for you, not in outer size, perhaps, but in inner meaning and value.

Not everyone has had the experience of an expanding Bible. To some of us it has almost seemed to dwindle. In a few cases it has vanished away completely. Some portions of it grew so familiar that there were no more depths and mysterious treasure-houses remaining. We had explored, we thought, every nook and cranny of these Scripture rooms. Other parts we "gave up"; they did not yield any meaning to us; they might or might not be valuable in the abstract, or to others; they contained nothing for us; we let them alone. If you want to know how much your Bible has contracted, go over your own particular copy, used for years, and mark the vast stretches that are as clean and bright and unmarred as the day you got the book; it will reveal as accurately and as unmistakably as a stethoscope or skiagraph, the degree in which you are suffering from that wasting spiritual disease known as "contracted Bible."

It is said that there are those who have seen their Bible contract before their eyes under the malign rays of a destructive "criticism." But that is by no means the most prevalent cause of the complaint; it blights those who "would not know criticism if they met it in the street." And, with a steady head, a sound heart, and a living, active faith, there is not much damage that any kind of "criticism" can do to your Bible or to you. You might have to change some of your theories about the Bible, or you might not; but the Bible itself you will not have to throw away; it is God's own self-evidencing Word. Keep on studying, living, working, walking with Jesus—and you will get back every bit of it that you think you have lost.

The normal thing is to have an expanding Bible. No man as yet has had a full-sized one. But he and it ought steadily to grow; and they will grow, together, "with equal pace."—Condensed from an article in The Sunday School Worker, by Dr. Philip Wendell Crannell.

The Word of our God Shall Stand Forever. Imagine for a moment that it would be possible to destroy all copies of the Bible the world over. It could be re-written in very large part from the quotations in literature and history. Imagine that all books of whatever sort could be destroyed. How many could be reproduced from memory? Poetry is more easily remembered than prose, and much of the writings of the poets could be again written; but what prose works, what collection of books of all kinds of writing, such as our Bible is, could be reproduced? There are certain portions of the Bible that have less value for us than they had for the people for whom they were first written, but most of these, Biblical scholars could re-write, and certainly much of the historical and poetical books, all of the Psalms, most of the prophets and all of the books of the New Testament, could be rewritten from the memories of thousands of Christians. The Bible is too thoroughly imbedded in history and literature, too deeply graven on human hearts, ever to be lost. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand forever.

For Discussion. 1. Jeremiah's assurance of Judah's Doom. See Smith's Jerusalem, Vol. II, 242-247; Stanley's Jewish Church, Vol. II, 458-464.

2. How the Bible was written. See Dean Hodge's How to Know the Bible.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the fate of Jehoiakim? 2. Of Jehoiachin? 3. Of Zedekiah? 4. What persecutions did Jeremiah endure? 5. How could he have saved himself? 6. What frightened away the Babylonians who were besieging Jerusalem? 7. Tell some of the symbols which Jeremiah used to enforce his teaching. 8. Was Jeremiah's patriotism more difficult and rare than the patriotism that leads one to fight for one's country? 9. How do you appraise Zedekiah? 10. How do you appraise Jeremiah?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A KING WHO SCORNED GOD'S WORD

Beginning the Lesson. What king of Judah became so proud and arrogant that he tried to usurp the priests's functions? How was he punished? In a lesson about Uzziah we recalled the Sicilian's Tale in Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn: who will tell it?

There is nothing so easy to acquire as arrogance. In the South you hear the saying, "As proud as a pampered alley cat." For a dirty, starving cat of the alleys that cross from street to street behind the houses, if taken and cared for in luxury will in a few days demand the softest cushions, the warmest seat, and the richest cream as her right.

And there is nothing that leads to arrogance so quickly as flattery. King Jehoiakim had probably been fulsomely flattered all his life. Eastern people are much more lavish with gracious and flattering forms of speech than we of the West. "O king, live forever! May an unworthy servant dare to mention that the king's breakfast is served?" If people addressed you in terms of that sort, wouldn't you finally come to think yourself really important?

So Jehoiakim dared to set himself above the Word of God. He hated it becasue it showed forth the evil of his deeds and therefore he wished to have it destroyed. He was like the people of the Bahamas of long ago. The governor of the islands was about to return to England, and offered to do his best to secure from the English government whatever the colonists most desired. What do you suppose they wanted? "Tell them to tear down the light-houses," they said, "for they are ruining the colony!" The men were wreckers, and they hated the light because it hindered their evil deeds.

The Lesson Story. *Scene One.* Jeremiah's room, a plain bare-looking room with the bed, the stand, and the lamp. Jeremiah is walking up and down and talking as he walks. Baruch, his scribe, or secretary as we should call him, is rapidly writing down his words, the warnings and prophecies which Jeremiah has been uttering to the kings and people of Judah for a quarter of a century now. Prophet and scribe are carrying out God's will, who would give his people a chance to hear the warnings again and repent of their evil doings.

Scene Two. It is several months later. The roll has been finished. We are

in the court of the temple. An immense crowd has gathered. Standing on steps above the throng is Baruch, who is reading the words that Jeremiah has dictated. The faces of the people show that they are impressed by those grave words of warning, the prophecy of punishment for sin.

Scene Three. One listener has been so disturbed by the words that he has gone to the council-chamber, to the princes who are sitting in council together, and is now telling them what Baruch is reading. They send for Baruch and listen earnestly as the latter reads the prophecy to them. "This is very serious," one of them says, "the king must hear these words." "But the king is already angry with Jeremiah," another reminds them; "I fear he will kill Jeremiah as he did Uriah." "We will warn Jeremiah to hide himself," they decide, "and we will go to the king and tell him about these words."

Scene Four. We are now in the warmest room, the winter room, of the palace. It is hung around with silken hangings, and there is a basin, or brazier as it is called, full of burning coals before which the king, in bright-colored robes, is seated. Several other men are standing around the king. Three princes enter and tell Jehoiakim the king about a wonderful roll which Baruch has been reading to the people. "Fetch it," commands Jehoiakim. The roll of parchment which we saw in the first picture is brought in. "Read it," the king orders. As Jehudi reads the king grows angry. He hears Jeremiah's rebuke of sin and call to repentance, and his prophecy of the kingdom's destruction for its sins, but he has not intention of heeding his warning. He seizes the roll, slashes it with his knife, and throws it into the fire before him. Three of his courtiers urge him not to destroy the roll, but he pays no heed to them, and soon the whole roll is reduced to ashes. In his rage the king orders his officers to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but the latter are not to be found.

Scene Five. We are in the room which we saw in our first scene. Jeremiah and Baruch are making another roll, writing again the words that the king burned and adding yet other words. The word of our Lord shall stand forever.

Scene Six. Modern Sunday Schools studying the text.

The Futility of Jehoiakim's Deed. Jehoiakim acts like the ugly princess who saw herself for the first time in a mirror, and not liking her looks, smashed the mirror. This did not change her looks, nor did the king's burning the roll change the punishment that Jeremiah warned him would be meted out for his wickedness.

It was as futile as the Wind's words to the moon in George Macdonald's verse:

"Said the Wind to the Moon, 'I will blow you out,'"

but after all the Wind's efforts the Moon still shone.

This rejection of Jeremiah and his warnings recalls many fairy tales (Cinderella, for example) in which the characters are too stupid and too arrogant to see virtue or wisdom in those with whom they are familiar.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

There's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be heard,
But they whom the truth would indite.—Burns.

"You can neither bury, drown, nor burn the truth!"

It is not pre-eminent seamanship to put the lookout man in irons because he sings out "Breakers ahead!"—Dr. Maclaren.

Some people have a very small Bible, for they read only the part they like and leave the rest alone.—D. L. Moody.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. X. King Jehoiakim and the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was king at this time? 2. Why was Jeremiah hated? 3. What danger threatened Jerusalem? 4. Why was Jeremiah cast into prison? 5. What did Jesus teach about persecution? (Mt. 5.10-12). 6. Did it require much courage for Ebed-meleck to do what he did? 7. Name the qualities extolled in the Beatitudes and see how many of them Jeremiah possessed. 8. When should one tell disagreeable truths? 9. Write two columns of contrasting adjectives or phrases, the first column containing those applicable to Zedekiah (Afraid—Brave; Weak—Strong; Irresolute—Steadfast; Shifting in policy—Firm of purpose; Disobedient to God—Obedient to God; Luxurious—Suffering; Honored—Scorned, etc.).

JEREMIAH CAST INTO PRISON

Golden Text

Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. Jeremiah 1.8

LESSON Jeremiah 37.1 to 38.13 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 40.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Genesis 39.19-23; Jeremiah 20.1-18; Luke 3.18-20; Acts 12.1-11; 16.19-34; 24.22-27; Revelation 1.9

JEREMIAH 38.4 Then the princes said unto the king, Let this man, we pray thee, be put to death; forasmuch as he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. 5 And Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you. 6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchijah the king's son, that was in the court of the guard: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire.

7 Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin), 8 Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, 9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die in the place where he is, because of the famine; for there is no more bread in the city. 10 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. 11 So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence rags and worn-out garments, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12 And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these rags and worn-out garments under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. 13 So they drew up Jeremiah with the cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JEREMIAH'S COUNSEL, verses 1-3. Jeremiah was held a prisoner in the guard-court at Jerusalem during its siege by the Babylonians (see The Historical Background). He prophesied the fall of the city and advised surrender.

II. JEREMIAH DENOUNCED BY THE PRINCES, verses 4,5. The princes denounced Jeremiah to the king as one whose words weakened the defense of the city. *Let this man be put to death,* they counseled, for he *seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. He is in your hands,* said the weak king, I can not stand *against you.* "To be weak is to be miserable" (Milton). "He was afraid of Jeremiah, afraid of God, afraid of his princes, afraid of his enemies, afraid even to be himself" (Emily Huntley).

III. JEREMIAH CAST INTO A DUNGEON, verse 6. They lowered Jeremiah into the dungeon in the guard-court belonging to one of the king's sons, evidently expecting thus to compass his death by famine or disease, for *in the dungeon there was no water, but mire, and Jeremiah sank in the mire.* "It is difficult not to imagine a connection between this incident and the sixty-ninth Psalm: 'I sink in the mire, where there is no bottom. Deliver me out of the mire, that I sink not; let not the well shut its mouth upon me'" (Stanley).

IV. THE RESCUE OF JEREMIAH, verses 7-13. One of the Ethiopian guards, Ebed-melech, feared for Jeremiah's life. He sought the king, found him *sitting in the gate of Benjamin,* the northern entrance to the temple, told him of Jeremiah's peril, and obtained from him a revocation of his order. He gave Ebed-melech a guard of thirty men to rescue Jeremiah. Ropes were covered with *soft rags and worn-out garments* to protect Jeremiah's *armholes,* or arm-

pits, and by their means he was drawn up out of the dungeon. *And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.* "This was a part of the court surrounding the palace railed off to guard prisoners in, whom it was not desired to throw into a common dungeon; their friends had free access to them, but they might not pass beyond the area in which they were confined" (Driver).

V. JEREMIAH DURING THE SIEGE. "One more secret interview the prophet had with the king, carefully concealed from the imperious nobles, and was then remanded to his former state prison, where he remained secluded during the rest of the siege, though with a certain amount of freedom, and with the companionship of his faithful Baruch. Two striking scenes enlivened this solitude. One was his grateful remembrance of his Ethiopian benefactor, whose safety in the coming troubles he positively predicted. The other was his interview with his cousin Hanameel. He was sitting in the open court which enclosed the prison, with many of the citizens of Jerusalem round him. Suddenly his cousin entered with the offer, startling at that moment of universal confusion, to sell the ancestral plot of ground at their native Anathoth, of which, in the fall of their family, Jeremiah was the last and nearest heir. Had the prophet been less assured of the ultimate return of his people, he might well have hesitated at a proposal which seemed only like the mockery that he had before encountered from his townsmen. But he felt assured that the present cloud would pass away, and, with a noble confidence which has often been compared to that of the Roman senator who bought the ground occupied by the camp of Hannibal, formally purchased the field in the presence of Baruch and the assembled Jews; and then broke out, once again, first in prose and then in poetry, into the expressions of his perfect conviction that, after the misery of siege and captivity, the land of Palestine should be again peaceably bought and sold, and that for all future ages the royal family of David and the Levitical tribe should exercise their functions in a spirit of justice never before known within the walls of Jerusalem. It is not the only time in the history of States and Churches that he who has been denounced as a deserter and traitor, becomes in the last extremity the best comforter and counsellor. Demosthenes, who had warned his fellow-countrymen in his earlier days against their excessive confidence, in his later days was the only man who could reassure their excessive despondency. Herder, who in his earlier days had been attacked by contemporary theologians as a heretic, was, as years rolled on, invoked as their only help against the rising tide of unbelief. Let all such, in every age, accept the omen of the mingled darkness and light which marks the vicissitudes of the career of Jeremiah" (Dean Stanley).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

There is no more bread in the city, verse 9. The usual oriental public oven is a long, low, stone-built vault, like half a railway-engine's boiler, with a stone pavement down the middle, and a long, narrow strip at each side for the fire-wood. In the evening the ashes are raked out and the children of the poor often bring a piece of tin, or broken water-jar, on which to carry home some of the glowing embers for the cooking of the evening meal (Is. 30.14). In the night the brush-wood and logs are laid in position for the baking of the next morning, the door of the oven being closely shut to keep in the heat and prevent the rapid consumption of the fuel. The reference to this in Hosea 7.4,6 rather implies that the bakers attended to the preparation of the dough as well as the baking of the loaves.—G. M. Mackie, in Bible Manners and Customs.

An Oven in Nazareth. From a Photograph

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What instances of faithfulness in the face of danger did we have in the First Quarter's lessons? In previous lessons of this Quarter? What characteristics has Jeremiah shown? What especially weak king have we heard about, and how did he show his weakness?

The Fate of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. Six years after he burned Jeremiah's roll, Jehoiakim's eleven-year-rule came to an end, but the manner of his death is obscure. See 2 K. 24.6 and 2 Ch. 36.6. Three months later Nebuchadnezzar came and besieged Jerusalem, 597 B. C., plundered the temple of its sacred vessels, and according to 2 Ch. 36.6 (but see 2 K. 24.6), carried Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, who had been king meanwhile, away into exile in Babylon with the different officials of his court and other notables and the leading craftsmen and their families, at least twenty thousand in all. "Those taken into exile were like good figs, while those left were as the bad figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad," said Jeremiah, Jer. 24.1-10.

Cameo of Nebuchadnezzar

Zedekiah, the Last King of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, a brother of Jehoiakim, on the throne as his vassal. Zedekiah reigned 597-586 B. C. For four or five years he remained submissive to his Chaldean master. The prophet Ezekiel (chapter 8) gives a picture of the idolatry that prevailed in Jerusalem at this time. In 588 Hophra became Pharaoh of Egypt and Zedekiah plotted with that monarch to help him cast off his yoke of bondage. Nebuchadnezzar suddenly appeared and began a siege of Jerusalem. The Egyptian army moved to its relief. Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege to attack the Egyptians. Zedekiah and his courtiers seem to have believed that their foe would retreat as Sennacherib had in the days of Zedekiah. He sent two of his officers to Jeremiah to ask the prophet to intercede with Jehovah. Jeremiah sent back word to the king that the Babylonians would return and that the capture of Jerusalem was certain.

During the interval that the raising of the siege permitted, Jeremiah was leaving the city by the north gate, to visit his native city of Anathoth, when he was arrested by the officer on duty on the absurd charge of intending to desert to the Chaldeans. He was dragged into the presence of the princes, and then was beaten and imprisoned. During this imprisonment the king sent for him secretly only to be told by the prophet that he, the king, would be taken captive. Jeremiah asked that he might not be sent back to his dungeon, and Zedekiah had him placed in the guard-court (court of the guard).

The prison in those days was always a part of the dwelling of some prominent person. The whole plateau on which stood the temple and palace is today honeycombed with cellars and passages and cisterns, originally excavated for building stones, and used as store-houses, stables and prisons. Many of them answer the description of "the dungeon where there was no water, but mire" which was Jeremiah's prison.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

One difficulty in the presentation of this, and similar lessons, lies in the strangeness of the historic and geographic setting, and in the strange names of the characters. To understand the story and to have it really vivid for your pupils, some of these things must be explained. And some of them must be ignored, for the temptation is to get lost among them. Another difficulty lies in the many lessons contained in the one story. In your lesson preparation, you will early study all these things till your mind is full of information. On Monday and Tuesday enrich your mind by study; on Wednesday and Thursday look for familiar examples of parallel import; and then on Friday and Saturday turn back to the Bible text and arrange your material.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LESSONS FROM JEREMIAH'S CAREER

Beginning the Lesson. "Lessons from Jeremiah's Career" is our theme today, but first of all let us comment upon the striking lesson from Zedekiah.

Dr. Maclaren calls Zedekiah "the archaic Mr. Facing-bothways." He was, in truth, a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Both his conduct of national affairs and his treatment of Jeremiah show this. He had neither strength of character nor force of will. He believed that Jehovah was the God of Israel and that Jeremiah was his prophet, and he was influenced by Jeremiah when he was with him—but when away from the prophet he was the tool of the princes who hated Jeremiah.

Follow him in his treatment of the prophet. He begs Jeremiah to pray for him, but will not heed his message from God. Jeremiah is imprisoned and Zedekiah seeks his counsel, but secretly, for fear of the princes. At the petition of Jeremiah he transfers him from the house of Jonathan the scribe to the court of the guard. The princes petition him to let them put Jeremiah to death, and he gives them permission, saying: "Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you." Poor Zedekiah, he is nothing but a double-minded king, and it is a time when the nation especially needs a king who can say in Shakespeare's words—

> I am as constant as the Northern star,
> Of whose true-fixed, resisting quality
> There is no fellow in the firmament.

The princes put Jeremiah in a foul dungeon and leave him there to starve to death. Ebed-melech begs the king to rescue Jeremiah, and the king directs him to remove the prophet from the dungeon to the court of the guard. Then the king has another secret interview with Jeremiah, but will not follow Jeremiah's counsel because, he says, he is afraid of the Jews that are fallen away to the Chaldeans, lest they mock him, and he begs the prophet not to let the princes know of their interview. Poor, vacillating king!

In the words of Dr. Maclaren, he was a small man on a great stage, a weakling set to face circumstances that would have taxed the strongest. Like most weak men, he found that temptations to do wrong abounded more than visible inducements to do right, and he was afraid to do right, and fancied that he was compelled by the force of circumstances to do wrong. So he drifted and drifted, and at last was smashed to fragments on the rocks, as all men are who do not keep a strong hand on the helm and a steady eye on the compass. The winds are good servants but bad masters. If we do not coerce circumstances to carry us on the course which conscience has picked out on the chart, they will wreck us.

Jeremiah's Attitude during the Interval of Respite. (See The Historical Background). The city was delirious with joy. The Chaldeans had withdrawn, Pharaoh would prove more than a match for them, they would not return. The thunder-cloud had broken—there was nothing to fear. But Jeremiah never changed his note. It seemed like a raven's croak amid the songs of spring birds. Very depressing! Very unpopular! Very likely to spread suspicion and panic! Only too gladly would he have yielded to the current flowing around him. But he dared not; and when the king sent another deputation to inquire through him of Jehovah he returned this terrible reply: "Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire" (37.1-10). God's prophet had too clear a vision of the issue of the duel between Chaldea and Egypt to be able to buoy up the people with hopes of deliverance.

It is impossible to recite or read this story without admiration for the man who dared to stand alone with God against a nation in arms. It makes us think of Judson, pursuing his work for the salvation of Burmah amid the treachery and hostility of the king; of Moffat, going alone and unarmed into the territory of the terrible Africander; of John Hunt amid the ferocious cannibals of Fiji; of John G. Paton, who persevered amid fifty attempts to take his life. Surely the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Our duty is to see to it that we are on God's plan and doing his work; to wrap around our souls the sense of his presence; to keep our ears open to the perpetual assurance, "I am with thee to deliver thee."—Dr. F. B. Meyer, in Jeremiah, Priest and Prophet.

The Tragic Jeremiah. In Jeremiah we reach the summit of prophetic

greatness and power. Never again, until in Christ, did prophecy reach his level. His solitary figure towers over his time like a colossus, too great to be appreciated by men of his age. A strange and turbulent nature was his. He experienced the painful loneliness of genius. He was often torn between conflicting emotions of duty and seclusion, taste and obligation, ambition to preach the word and a sensitiveness to criticism. "Oh, that my head were waters," he would bitterly cry out, "and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them!" (9.1,2).

Jeremiah was by nature affectionate and tender as a woman and, therefore, shrank from the prophetic task of playing the rôle of muckraker. Yet, he never left his post nor ceased his preaching. He clung to his duty with grim desperation; never letting go, though he pined for quietude. Duty and Divine command were to this man more imperative than natural taste and personal inclination. Because he had a keen mind and a tender heart, depth of feeling and breadth of mind, his was a life at once heroic and pathetic, dramatic and tragic. He lived a life of perpetual martyrdom for the cause of Jehovah, although he preferred the scholar's seclusion.

He it is who is best fitted to give the highest and fullest revelation of God which is to be found in the Old Testament. Jeremiah (1) spiritualized God (10.8-16); (2) purified worship (7.1-7); (3) deepened the sense of sin (17.9-11); (4) gave the death blow to idolatry (10.14-16); (5) declared for individual responsibility (31.29-33); and (6) prepared his people for the impending national ruin, so that they could survive destruction of state and church, loss of land and ruin of temple, without surrendering the essentials of their faith (see 6.18-20; 14.11,12; 17.9,10; 31.16-33). It was a great work that this prophet accomplished in spite of many and terrible oppositions that would have crushed lesser men.

His personal sufferings at the hands of his countrymen were greater than those of any other prophet. He was banished from the temple precincts (36.5,6), imprisoned (chapters 20, 26, 38), his family torn from him and his home confiscated (10.20), charged with treason (chapters 26, 38), his literary productions destroyed (chapter 36), and at length he himself kidnapped and carried by force to Egypt, where his last sermons were preached (chapter 43). Jeremiah's cup of bitterness was filled to the brim (20.14). Jewish tradition adds that he was murdered in Egypt and his bones left to bleach on the sands of the Nile.

Inasmuch as his religious contribution to humanity is immense and imperishable, can one say that he was wholly without reward? His great ideas, centuries ahead of his time, molded later Jewish thought profoundly. Jesus himself must have been strongly attracted by Jeremiah's sermons, which he read in the Old Testament, for Jesus quotes him freely (see Mt. 2.17; 16.14; 27.9; Mk. 7.21; compare Jer. 17.9; 29.12; 16.14 with Lk. 6.45). Some of Jesus's teaching so much resembled that of Jeremiah that the people believed the ancient prophet had re-appeared (Mt. 16.14).—Condensed from The Prophets in the Light of Today, by John Godrey Hill.

Jeremiah the Victim of Misunderstanding. "Jeremiah saw things from an angle and a light that his generation could not understand. He stood on the heights and in the light, while others stood below and in the shadows. His ears were open to the voice of God, while other ears were deaf. He saw God, while others were blind to the Divine presence. He simply paid the penalty of all martyrs. The man who knows the truth and dares to bear witness to it to a generation incapable of understanding it, must always expect to suffer."

The Potter's Hands and the Clay. The mission of Jeremiah was to preach sermons to a people who had come into a terrible condition because of threatened war. God wanted them to understand that, even though they were his people, they must continually acknowledge his sovereignty over them, and that they must keep in right relationship with him if they would prosper.

God told Jeremiah to go down to the potter's house and get an illustration for the next Sabbath's sermon. The preacher went down and watched the potter for a while as he fashioned vessels of clay on the wheel. Suddenly the potter crushed one of the vessels that was almost finished, and that seemed to Jeremiah as good as any of the others. Having destroyed the vessel that did not please him, the potter pounded the clay into a lump and began to make it into a new vessel.

God told Jeremiah to go and preach, using that as his illustration. For as the potter has power over the clay to make and to change as he pleases, so is the nation in the hands of God to do with as seems best to him.

For three years we had watched the nations of the world being crushed down again into lumps of clay for the starting of other vessels that would be more pleasing to the Potter. Then, suddenly, our own nation that seemed to us to be growing into a vessel beautiful and strong felt the hands of the Potter, and down went the walls. The plans so well laid and so nearly worked out are spoiled and almost forgotten, and now we are a lump of clay again in the hands of the Potter and he is pressing and smoothing and moulding as we turn upon the wheel. (This was written during the War.) God grant that the new vessel may be one that seemeth good unto the Potter.

It is not for us to try to mould the national life and purpose without God and his Son Jesus Christ, into whose hands the nations of the world have been given; it is for us to make sure first of all that our nation is right with God and that we have the spirit of submission and obedience to him. Then the vessel will come out a vessel of honor, for the hands of God will be moulding the clay on the wheel.—The Youth's Companion.

Jeremiah a Type of Christ. Of all the Old Testament heroes none more closely foreshadows our Lord than does Jeremiah. Jeremiah commenced his ministry at a time when the whole nation was astir with a revival movement—a movement which resulted in the great reformation of religion under Josiah (2 K. 22). So Jesus, when he stepped from the obscurity of Nazareth to preach, found a people eagerly confessing their sins and submitting to the baptism of repentance. Jeremiah's ministry consisted largely in the criticism and denunciation of the religious life of the day which, despite the outward reformation, was immoral and fanatical. So Jesus addressed his severest rebukes to the religious leaders whose hypocrisy and conventional religiosity outraged God. Jeremiah incurred the grievous hatred, not only of the priests, but particularly of politicians and of the court party. For he opposed the popular anti-Babylonian and "spirited" foreign policy, and conducted his campaign against the military party to such an extremity as even to urge the soldiers during the siege of Jerusalem to desert to the enemy (Jer. 38.2). So Jesus incurred the resentment and hatred of those politicians who wished to make him king. Jeremiah was wearied and made miserable by the constant strife and failure which his office involved. He even went so far as to curse the day of his birth (Jer. 20.14). Jesus also had to pass through great stress and sorrow and testing, as we learn from the account of the temptation in the wilderness, the words he uttered in weeping over Jerusalem, and the final agony of Gethsemane; though in the case of the Savior suffering was linked with the utmost patience and submission. Jeremiah was rejected by those most dear to him. His fellow townsmen at Anathoth sought his life. So Jesus had to suffer even at the hands of his mother and brethren who tried to restrain him on the plea of madness, and eventually was done to death by those he came to save. That Jeremiah after his death roused the profoundest love and veneration on the part of his countrymen we know well, and indeed it is probable that Is. 53, which we see clearly to be a foreshadowing of the Christ, was actually suggested by the noble and tragic example of Jeremiah.

In many things the contrast between Jeremiah and Jesus is most pronounced. Jeremiah was by no means perfect. Ill-temper, impatience, and even fear sometimes overcame him. He was far removed from the sinlessness of Jesus. Jeremiah also felt himself in bondage to God, serving him and speaking his words almost in spite of himself. He could not say with Jesus "I and my Father are one." Jeremiah felt that he was in the world to live for his fellows. His ministry lasted forty years. Jesus had before him the thought rather of his death. He came to die for men. Jeremiah could only point onward to a time when a new covenant should be given by Jehovah.—Newton H. Marshall, in The British Weekly.

For Discussion. 1. The lesson of the Potter and the clay, Jer. 18. "There is no type of failure that God has not taken hold of and remade" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan). Recall the remaking of the expert burglar, proud of his reputation, given to terrible oaths and all manner of wickedness, into the expert "Butterfly Man," humble about his fame and given to deeds of mercy and love, as powerfully portrayed in "Slippy Magee."

2. In Jeremiah we have the test and the proof of the highest patriotism.

3. It is Ebed-melech, a foreigner, not one of the chosen people, a palace official knowing well what vengeance he may be exposed to, who appeals to the irresolute king and rescues Jeremiah from his miserable condition. Religion is a thing neither of skin nor creed nor ritual. Augustine may declare that the virtues of pagans are but "splendid vices"—but this is not the attitude even of the Old Testament, let alone of Christ. God's grace has as free an entry into the heart of the Samaritans as into the heart of the Jew, and Ebed-melech is moved to kindness when Jews are cruel. Every man is capable of love and holiness, and we should reverence every man as a potential saint.—Newton H. Marshall, in The British Weekly.

4. "Suffering has its undoubted purpose in the world. When God framed the earth he deliberately so fashioned it as to make suffering inevitable—for reasons."

5. Is not he who says "My country right or wrong" a traitor rather than a patriot?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the parallel accounts in Jer. 28.28 to 39.14; 52.1-30; 2 Ch. 36.11-21. 2. Read the Book of Lamentations. 3. What causes led to the captivity of Judah? 4. What were the sins of Zedekiah? 5. Of the nation? 6. What warnings had they had? 7. Does retribution always follow wrong? 8. What solemn oath as regards Nebuchadnezzar had Zedekiah taken and broken? (Ezek. 17.11-21). 9. Does this excuse the treatment he received at Nebuchadnezzar's hands? 10. What did the destruction of the temple mean to the Hebrews? 11. What parallels in the Great War to the scenes connected with the fall of Jerusalem? 12. Has our nation anything to learn from this downfall of Judah?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS
FAITHFUL IN THE FACE OF DANGER

Beginning the Lesson. We have a proverb about a rolling stone—what is it? What does it mean? Did you ever hear of a rolling plant? In South America there is a strange plant that never stays long in one place. It is blown along by the wind until it finds itself in a moist place; then it sends down its roots and becomes green, but when the moisture in the ground disappears it pulls up its roots, rolls itself up, and is blown to another spot. This rolling plant never amounts to much; after a short time it becomes a bundle of dry roots and dead leaves.

There are people so like this plant that they might be called rolling men or women, boys or girls. Their minds don't "stay put"; one day they want to do one thing, and the next day they want to do the opposite thing. One time they are resolved to do what is right, and very soon afterwards they are doing what is wrong. Zedekiah was that sort of person. He was weak, irresolute. What does "irresolute" mean? We shall see how his weakness led to wickedness.

Jeremiah's Faithful Warning. Submission to Babylon became more than ever the drift of all Jeremiah's preaching. "Nebuchadnezzar is God's tool. By him you are to be punished. Nothing can alter it. God has given him this land, and other lands, just as seemed meet to the Creator and Owner of the earth. All nations shall serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son after him, and his grandson after him. Those who refuse to serve Babylon will sorely regret it. Submission to him is the only thing that can help you." And in order that there should be no means lost to make the people understand this, Jeremiah had been down to the carpenter's shop for some pieces of wood.

The people wondered, and Jeremiah sat on the ground and worked. He made six yokes. Then he got up and, tying one firmly together, put it around his neck and walked off with the other five under his arm. He walked as far as the Red House, or palace. Then he waited outside. Inside the palace King Zedekiah was deep in council. For ambassadors had come to him from five surrounding kings, who, uniting together, invited Zedekiah to join himself to them. Before Nebuchadnezzar became so formidable a foe, these nations had always been fighting against Jehoiakim. Now they wanted to make friends with Israel. Together they might crush the dreaded Babylonian monarch. Separately each must be overcome.

With endless ceremony and bowing and scrapings, the foreign messengers at

last were ushered out of the Red gates. The prophet stepped forward, a striking figure in his plain dark garment among all the gay dresses and royal pomp.

"Here is a gift for your masters," he said, handing round his yokes, "one for the King of Edom, one for the King of Moab, one for the King of the Ammonites, one for the King of Tyre, and one for the King of Zidon. Take them with you and say to your Kings: 'Put the yoke around your neck and learn this: if you will submit to Nebuchadnezzar, all will be well; for the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the King of Babylon and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord.' If you will not put your neck under the yoke of the King of Babylon, then woe betide you."

Jeremiah wore that wooden yoke wherever he went, and never ceased to urge on all his hearers to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. But neither Zedekiah, nor his servants, nor the people of the land took any notice of what he said.

Instead they sent secret ambassadors down to Egypt to ask Pharaoh-Hophra to help them, which Zedekiah had faithfully promised he would not do when Nebuchadnezzar had made him King. Zedekiah's promises did not count for more than his principles. Great hopes were raised in the threatened city when news came that Egypt had risen to the occasion. Pharaoh's Army was on its way to their help.

"Well, Jeremiah," asked the King, "what do you say to this? Things look better. Surely you believe that God is going to help us now?" Jeremiah must have felt perplexed.

But God looked back to the day when Zedekiah had sworn to Nebuchadnezzar, and had given his hand in token of his promise never to seek help or horses from Egypt. Shall he prosper? Shall he escape that doeth such things? "No," said the Lord, "Pharaoh's army which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt, into their own land, and the Fierce Foe shall take Jerusalem."

Jeremiah repeated all this to the King. For a moment Zedekiah's face fell; but he looked out of the window at his soldiers, and he thought of the great army on its way, and he made up his mind he would not be frightened into surrender by the mad prophet.

And the very thing Zedekiah was looking for did happen. Hophra did come. Nebuchadnezzar retreated from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's Army. What could Jeremiah say now? Still only the same old warning, "Deceive not yourselves; Nebuchadnezzar shall return and burn this city with fire."

Jeers met Jeremiah's declaration, and the city settled down again as if no judgment overshadowed it.

Sore at heart Jeremiah walked down the narrow streets towards the Gate of Benjamin. Perhaps he meant to wander in the fields and speak to God, away from the taunts and jeers. He wanted to be alone, besides taking the opportunity to get in provisions.

In the gateway, on duty, was Captain Irijah, the grandson of Hananiah. The prophet, suspecting nothing, walked slowly towards the gate. A rough hand on his shoulder roused him, as he stepped beneath the archway. "You are caught now, Jeremiah," said the young Captain, "caught slipping away to the enemy, you traitor!"

"It is false," called out Jeremiah hotly. "No such thing."

All his protestations, all his explanations were useless. The Captain hearkened not to any. He only hurried his prisoner back to judgment, and Jeremiah, without a friend to stand by him, was cruelly beaten and cast into prison.—Condensed from The Boiling Caldron, by Lettice Bell.

Courage and Sense. They had a school court at the Winston School. Among the cases presented was that of "George McKnight vs. Richard Hurd." George testified as follows: "Richard said my mother was ugly, and I said she wasn't half so ugly as his mother. And he twisted my arm till I cried, and he said, 'Now will you dare say my mother is ugly?' And I said, 'Your mother is the ugliest woman I ever saw.' And he twisted it again, and I screamed, and the two big Shepherd boys came and stopped him, and I want damages."

Richard acknowledged the general truthfulness of George's account, and Sadie, the judge, sentenced him to the loss of all his short recesses until he apologized. Then she said to George, "Is Richard's mother the ugliest woman you ever saw?" "N-n-o," said George, "but I wasn't going to back down for anybody's arm-twisting." Then thus spoke the judge: "You have some courage, George McKnight, but you haven't any sense." Was she right?

George, like the Prophet Jeremiah, told disagreeable things to a person strong enough to punish him, and stood by his statements in spite of the punishment he received. In what ways did the two cases differ? Are these differences important?

What Chrysostom Feared. Chrysostom had incurred the displeasure of the emperor, Arcadius, by too great frankness in reproving him for his sins. The emperor, unable to devise a form of punishment which seemed adequate to express his indignation, took counsel with his courtiers.

"Exile him!" cried one. "What good will that do?" asked the emperor. "He looks upon the whole world as his fatherland."

"Confiscate his property," suggested a second. "Whom will that harm?" asked the emperor. "Not Chrysostom, but only the poor to whom he gives all that he has.'"

"Cast him into prison," proposed a third. "What would be the use?" retorted Arcadius. "He would glory in his chains."

"Well, then, kill him, kill him!" cried all the courtiers at once. "How would that help?" asked the emperor. "It would simply open the gates of heaven to him. Think of something else."

"We must try to make him sin," murmured one courtier, thoughtfully. "Chrysostom is afraid of nothing but sin."

Faithfulness the Antidote for Fear. "The best antidote for fear, according to a British officer in France, is anxiety for the safety of others and some task which occupies the mind. Finding a mother, two children and a baby in a kitchen of a house that was struck by a shell, he forgot his own fear in his efforts to get them into the cellar and safety. He came back after the baby's crib with little concern, though the roof crashed in—he had found a counter-irritant to fear."

The Fearlessness of Faith. When J. G. Paton had offered himself as a missionary to the New Hebrides, some of his friends did their best to dissuade him from his purpose. An elder kept repeating, "The cannibals! You'll be eaten by the cannibals." Paton replied, "If I can live and die serving our Lord Jesus, it makes no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms." The elder then left him, exclaiming, "After that, I have no more to say."

Persecuted for Righteousness. "It is one of the most difficult achievements of Christian experience to be patient when one's motives are misconstrued and his good is evil spoken of. But this achievement is possible, and those who accomplish it are sure to win the favor of God, as well as the approval of their own hearts; for as Peter says: 'This is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.'"

Sentence Sermons to Remember. So then am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?—Paul.

The highest courage you can ever show is to dare to do your duty.—Wayland.

Courage isn't the last resort
In the work of life or the game of sport;
It isn't a thing that a man can call
At some future time when he's apt to fall.
If he hasn't it now, he will have it not
When the strain is great and the pace is hot,
For who would strive for a distant goal
Must always have courage within his soul.—Edgar A. Guest.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XI. The Prophet Jeremiah Cast into Prison.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who had made Zedekiah king? 2. What was the date of the destruction of Jerusalem? 3. How long did the Kingdom of Judah last after the fall of Samaria? (134 years). 4. What reason is given in Lam. 1.8 for the fall of Jerusalem? 5. What were some of the sins of the nation that Isaiah and Jeremiah denounced? 6. Why did the Babylonians burn the temple? 7. Where was Riblah? 8. Describe the journey from Jerusalem to Babylon. 9. How did the captains of the Babylonian army treat Jeremiah after capturing Jerusalem? (Jer. 39). 10. What choice was given Jeremiah? (Jer. 40.1-6).

THE DOWNFALL OF JUDAH

Golden Text

Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6.7

LESSON 2 Kings 25.1-21 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 137.1-6

REFERENCE MATERIAL Deuteronomy 28.15-19,25,36,37; 2 Chronicles 36.11-23; Jonah 1.1,2; Luke 19.41-44

2 KINGS 25.1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about. 2 So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 3 On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. 4 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about); and *the king* went by the way of the Arabah. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. 6 Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. 7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

8 Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. 9 And he burnt the house of Jehovah, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house, burnt he with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were *with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11 And the residue of the people that were left in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the residue of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away captive. 12 But the captain of the guard left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE FINAL SIEGE OF JERUSALEM, verses 1-3. *It came to pass in the ninth year of his* (Zedekiah's) *reign, in the tenth month,* according to the Babylonian calendar which numbered its months from the spring season, the tenth month corresponding to our January, *that Nebuchadnezzar* (the more correct spelling is Nebuchadrezzar) *King of Babylon, came, he and all his army,* and besieged Jerusalem. "The nation never forgot the month and the day on which the armies of Chaldea finally invested the city. It was felt as the day of the deepest gloom by the Israelite exiles (Ezek. 24). It has been commemorated as a fast, the Fast of Tebeth, ever since in the Jewish Church" (Stanley). *They built forts against it round about,* probably movable towers from which missiles could be discharged over the city walls. Jerusalem held out for eighteen months. From Jer. 3.4,7 we learn that a part of Nebuchadnezzar's troops were engaged in attacking Lachish and Azekah during this time, and from Jer. 37.5,11 (our lesson last week) that the reported approach of an army from Egypt caused a brief raising of the siege. Then the famine became so acute that at last *there was no bread for the people:* read the account in Jer. 21.7-9; Lam. 4.8-10; 5.10.

II. THE FLIGHT AND FATE OF ZEDEKIAH, verses 4-7. *Then a breach was made in the city* walls, and when *the men of war* saw the princes of Babylon enter the city, Jer. 39.4, they *fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the King's garden,* "on the south of the city, prob-

ably the 'fountain gate' of Nehemiah, the two walls being those below this gate along the west side of the east hill of Jerusalem, and the east side of the west hill" (Driver). They must have known that there was little chance of making good their escape, for *the Chaldeans were against the city round about.* The king fled *by the way of the Arabah,* a name given to the whole deep valley of the Jordan from the Sea of Galilee southward to the desert beyond the Dead Sea. He hoped to escape across the ford at Jericho and be safe in the mountainous region on the east of the Jordan, but the enemy pursued and made him a prisoner *in the plains of Jericho.* They carried him to *Riblah,* where Nebuchadnezzar was awaiting news of the victory. There the men appointed to pass sentence upon him decreed that he should be *bound in fetters,* bound hand and foot, and carried to Babylon. But first they *slew his sons before his eyes,* and all the nobles of Judah, Jer. 39.6 (the royal family and the influential men, that there might be no revolt), *and put out* Zedekiah's own eyes. Upon reaching Babylon Zedekiah was kept in prison till the day of his death, Jer. 52.11.

III. THE FATE OF JERUSALEM, verses 8-10, 13-17. *Now in the fifth month Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard* (literally, "chief of the executioners," the king's body guard to whom such duties belonged) came to complete the destruction of Jerusalem. The work of devastation was thoroughly done. The gold and silver vessels, and the pillars and vessels of brass of the temple were saved to be carried to Babylon, and then the sacred temple, on which such a passion of love had been lavished, was razed. The king's palace, and every great house in the city was burned, and the city walls were broken down.

IV. THE FATE OF THE PEOPLE, verses 11,12,22. *The residue of the people that were left in the city,* that is, the better citizens who had remained faithful to their country, *and those that fell away,* who had deserted to the Babylonians, *and the residue of the multitude,* the useful workers, were carried away captive to Babylon. The poorest of the people were left to cultivate the land, as *vinedressers and husbandmen.* Gedaliah, the son of Jeremiah's friend Ahikam, was made governorr of the cities of Judah with headquarters at Mizpah.

V. THE FATE OF JEREMIAH, Jer. 40. In the confusion of the capture of Jerusalem Jeremiah was taken bound as far as Ramah, but Nebuchadnezzar bade Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, permit him to choose whether he would go to Babylon in honor, or return to Judah. He chose to return. "How often would Jeremiah pass mournfully amid the blackened ruins! Here was the site of the altar; there of the Most Holy Place. There was the palace of David; and there was the place where he had so often stood to warn his people of their sins. What all this meant to Jeremiah words fail to say. No truer heart ever beat in patriot's bosom. What Phocion felt for Athens, what Savonarola for Florence, what the elder Pitt for England, amid the catastrophies that darkened his latter days—that in a concentrated form must Jeremiah have felt and suffered. Anticipating the words of One who in after days was to sit in the same mount and look across the valley, he might have said: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!'" (F. B. Meyer).

When Gedaliah the governor was treacherously slain by a prince of the house of David, the survivors, fearing the vengeance of the Babylonians, fled to Egypt, and forced Jeremiah to go with them. Tradition says that in Egypt he was martyred by his countrymen.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They built forts against it round about, verse 1. The city wall was high and strong, and it was useless to attempt to undermine it. It must be attacked not far from the summit. It was from the earth-works erected for this purpose (Jer. 32.24) that the battering-rams and storming-towers were brought to play upon the wall. Hence enormous labor was necessary before a suitable base of operations could be secured upon the sloping approaches to the city. When aggressive action was fairly begun, unless the besieged were numerous and skilful enough to disable the besiegers by arrows or other deadly weapons, only the very strongest walls could long endure the constant battering, followed by the

pickaxes, crowbars, and wall-hooks by which the stones were dislocated and removed. Moreover, a force of defenders, weakened or diminished by famine, could not long withstand a constant shower of missiles from the siege-towers.—McCurdy.

Put out the eyes of Zedekiah, verse 7. The blinding of prisoners was a common practice among the Babylonians, Assyrians and Persians. Once it was the custom for the Sultan of Turkey on ascending the throne to slay or blind all his half-brothers. Our illustration is from a marble slab found at Khorsabad, and represents Sargon of Assyria holding a prisoner by a thong attached to a ring inserted in his under-lip and thrusting a spear into his eye.

Sargon Blinding a Prisoner

Nebuchadnezzar's inscription reads: "To far off lands, distant hills, from the upper sea to the lower sea, immense journeys, . . . I pursued, and the disobedient I reduced, the rebellious I fettered." There is in the British Museum a pair of bronze fetters weighing nearly nine pounds which were found at Nineveh and probably resemble those with which Zedekiah was bound.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. By what nations was Samaria captured? When? Where were the people of the Northern Kingdom exiled? How was their land populated? What has Jeremiah constantly urged the people of the Southern Kingdom to do? What danger has he declared imminent? Who was the last king of Judah? Why did he not follow Jeremiah's advice? What people founded the New Babylonian Empire? Who was the first king? Who was his son? What did he accomplish by the battle of Carchemish? When he first besieged Jerusalem what king did he carry back to Babylon? Whom did he put on the throne of Judah?

The Fall of Jerusalem. The siege of Jerusalem was resumed by Nebuchadnezzar (recall our last lesson), and the city was finally taken "when all the bread was spent," in 586 B. C. Thus the Kingdom of Judah came to an end.

"July 9, B. C. 586. Some dates are written in fire on the pages of history. This is one so written. It is made to stand out vividly in detail. 'The eleventh year of Zedekiah, the fourth month, the ninth day of the month.' On that day the long-delayed judgment of God was executed. Jerusalem fell. The clock of Israel's history stopped, not to start again for fifty years. It was stopped by the finger of God, and the halted hands point silently and grimly to the hour when the crisis fell. Zedekiah was the twenty-third ruler since the Hebrew kingdom began with the crowning of Saul; he was the twentieth ruler over Judah, after the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam, B. C. 932; he was the eighth king after the fall of Samaria in B. C. 722. It was the termination of a period of five hundred and thirty-four years" (Dr. John T. McFarland).

The Giant of Babylon. "Nebuchadnezzar is well described as the 'Giant of Babylon,'" writes the Rev. W. M. Clow in The Sunday School Times. "Greatness is stamped on all he said and did. He was a man cast in an imperial mold—great-souled, broad-minded, large-hearted. He was the master mind of his generation. No man in his dominions had his reach and grasp in statecraft or in strategy. When we think of Nebuchadnezzar we must class him with Napoleon, or Peter the Great, or Charlemagne, or with the man to whom he was most akin, Alexander of Macedon.

"He was great in war. In his early years, while his father, Nabopolassar, was king in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar was the prince and darling of the vast Chaldean armies, and shared in the subjugation of Nineveh, the rival empire. When he came to the throne, he set himself to conquer the world as he knew it. He tamed the Bedweens of Arabia from the Red Sea to the uplands of Asia Minor. He took Tyre, which thought itself impregnable in its island keep, after a thirteen years' siege. He crumpled up the power of Egypt. He sat down before Jerusalem, angered by its proud rebelliousness, and after eighteen months of waiting sacked the city, and carried off the flower of its people as captives. 'Thou, O King,' said Daniel, 'art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory.'

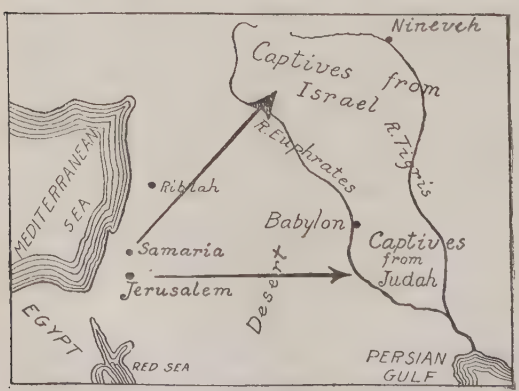
"He was even greater as a statesman and administrator. In the East to this day the fame of Nebuchadnezzar rests, not upon his soldierly exploits, but on his achievements in the arts of peace. In his public works he displayed a genius which shows his massive mind and his cultured taste. In walls and waterworks, in parks and gardens, in temples and palaces, he proved himself to be one of the master-builders of all time. It may be questioned if the world will ever again see such a city as this far-spreading garden-city of Babylon. Its citizens delighted in a costly refinement and ease. They reveled in luxury. In vessels of gold and silver, in soft carpets and dainty curtains—a manufacture which persists to this day—and in instruments of music, its workmen held as high a place in art as its sages kept in the wisdom of their time. We need not wonder that as Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of his palace, and looked out over the city he had built, his heart was lifted up, and he needed to be taught that 'those who walk in pride God is able to abase.'"

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Jerusalem to Riblah. Zedekiah and his warriors escaped through the southern gates and fled down the Kidron Valley to the Valley of the Jordan (the Arabah), but were captured on the Plains of Jericho. Then he was taken a prisoner two hundred miles northward to *Riblah* on the upper Orontes, about one hundred miles north of Dan, where Nebuchadnezzar was stationed. There his sons and the princes were slain and he was blinded, and then he was taken in fetters to Babylon.

The Route to Babylon. A month later (Jer. 52.4) the greater part of the population of Judah was deported to Babylon. They did not go directly east across the desert, but northward to Damascus, then across to the Euphrates, and southeastward to Babylonia.

Assyria, Babylonia, Chaldea. Keep in mind that while Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea lay in the region watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates, Assyria proper was on the north on both sides of the Tigris; Babylonia proper was south of Assyria between the Tigris and the Euphrates, and Chaldea proper was on the Persian Gulf southeast of Babylonia. At the time of the capture of Jerusalem the names of Babylonia and Chaldea both referred to the New Babylonian Kingdom founded by Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar.



Countries of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley

Babylon. Babylon was at this time a very ancient city. We know that its huge walls were three hundred feet high, that its "Hanging Gardens" were one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, and that the huge temple of Bel was grander than any of the other ancient temples. Its site has long been covered over to a depth

of fifty feet in places by the soil thrown upon it by the floods from the Euphrates River. Archæologists have dug through to the foundations of the ancient city. The very temple of Nebuchadnezzar has been unearthed, and men living in the twentieth century after Christ can walk over the pavement on which he walked seven centuries before Christ. Each brick in Nebuchadnezzar's palace is stamped with his name and royal titles in cuneiform script. The throne hall is an immense room, and the intricacy of the passages, rooms, and courts is said to be bewildering.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

You have taught a number of lessons dealing with individual sin and punishment. You have applied these lessons to individuals, and each pupil has been led to apply them to his own case. You have also taught lessons dealing with duties and sins within the group. And your pupils have done coöperative work, and have gained a class spirit. This lesson furnishes opportunity for thinking in terms of world relations, for a realization that God judges not only "all important me" and my group, but all the world, made up of many nations. And he shall judge between the nations, Is. 2.4.

The teaching of this lesson should send your pupils out feeling responsibility for national virtue. And by national virtue we mean not only the virtues common among citizens, but the righteous conduct of the nation in its international relations—individual responsibility for mass conduct. It was Zedekiah the king as representing the nation who thought his treaty with another nation only a scrap of paper, but it was the entire nation that suffered.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
RESULTS OF NATIONAL DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD

Beginning the Lesson. The Septuagint Version of the Book of Lamentations begins with these words: "And it came to pass, after Israel had been carried into captivity and Jerusalem had been laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping and lamenting with this lamentation over Jerusalem." Near the Damascus Gate on the north of Jerusalem there is a cave called Jeremiah's Grotto, which tradition says is the very spot where the prophet sat while writing Lamentations. Although the Hebrew version is anonymous, it is generally believed that the book is the work of Jeremiah. The book is read by pious Jews every Friday afternoon at the Jews' Wailing Place in the city of Jerusalem and on the ninth of August, the anniversary of the day on which the temple was burned, it is read in Jewish synagogues the world over.

For many lessons we have seen the destruction of Jerusalem slowly but surely approaching. Now we see its advent. The record is told dispassionately: it should be supplemented by the Book of Lamentations with its account of the horrors of the siege, and the pathos of the capture and destruction of the city, with its confession of sin, its acknowledgment that the punishment was of God for the sins of the nation, with its assurance that God pitied where he punished, and with its faith that in his mercy God would "renew their days as of old."

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is brought upon me, wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Thus the author of Lamentations expresses the intensity of his grief over the calamity which we today see befall his people.

The Cause of the Captivity. A modern historian might say that Jerusalem was captured because Hezekiah and his army were no match for the great Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, and because the last kings of Judah had followed a very unwise policy in trying to escape the Assyrian and then the Babylonian yoke by relying on help from Egypt. All this was true, but while these may seem the primary reasons for the Captivity, they are in fact only secondary. Back of the political causes were the moral causes. Judah had grievously sinned (Lam. 1.8), had become thoroughly corrupt, idolatry with all the evils in its train had spread with rapid pace during the last years of the kingdom, and only the severest measures could discipline her. The punishment of exile was sent by God, who employed Nebuchadnezzar as his servant (Jer.

25.9; 27.6) in working his will. Jehovah hath afflicted Jerusalem for the multitude of her transgressions (Lam. 1.5). The ax which was carried before a Roman Consul was bound up in a bundle of rods to show that the extreme penalty was never inflicted until milder means had failed. Milder means had been tried with the chosen people of God: the prophets had constantly warned them, many of the people had been carried away captive, and the treasures of the temple had been taken. Very patient and long-suffering had God been with them till, even as a physician counsels an operation as "a last resort," he used the drastic remedy of captivity to work their ultimate cure. In the words of Lamentations:

> The Lord will not cast off forever:
> For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.
> For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

We shall see in our next Quarter's lessons that the remedy proved efficacious. In Babylon the Jews gave up their gross idolatry, and the faithful remnant that eventually returned were loyal to Jehovah their God.

He that Being often Reproved, Hardeneth his Neck, Shall suddenly be Destroyed. It was not from lack of warning that Judah went to her doom. Take the Book of Jeremiah and cast your eyes along the running lines at the top of the page which give the leading topics of Jeremiah's message. This is what you will see: The people's former love and present apostasy; Their backsliding unexampled; The people's self-confidence vain; Jehovah's forbearance with their infidelity; Judah's conduct worse than Israel's; Judah threatened with invasion; A lament over Judah's devastation; Jerusalem's godlessness denounced; Her impending overthrow; A picture of Judah's guilt; Threatened siege of Jerusalem; Her ruinous fall to come because of her covetousness and obstinacy; Destruction to come from the North; Temple worship of no avail to the ungodly; Their idolatry denounced; Treachery and shamelessness of Judah, the avenger near; A lament over the desperate state of Zion; Ruin and exile threatened. I have repeated the references to the first nine chapters only, and there are forty-three more chapters in the book.

A Deserved Punishment. "The Man without a Country" in Dr. Hale's story, utters no complaint; he knows that he deserves his fate, that he is only reaping the harvest of the seed he has sown. So the people of Judah had the bitter knowledge that their exile was the just punishment for their sins. And many an exile from God today knows that he is responsible for all his woes.

"They surely deserved it, but not more than many another nation, ancient and modern, which has forgotten God," says a writer in The Pilgrim Monthly. "Suppose some one should undertake to right the present-day life of the American people, from the Divine point of view. He would have to tell how Christian people vie with worldlings in their love of wealth and what wealth brings, how great cities are left by the pleasure-loving and the fortune-seeking to become the prey of grafters, how an alarming percentage of marriages turn out unhappily and end in divorces, how the specious philosophy that evil is good in the making infects the masses. When we are disposed to condemn the Jews and to turn a deaf ear to our own Jeremiahs, to call them pessimists and unpatriotic, let us scrutinize ourselves afresh in the light of Christ's ideals."

There is a Limit to the Patience of God. The Christian Church before the Reformation refused to mend its ways, and it paid the price in its division and the religious wars of a hundred years. France, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, refused to mend her ways, and she paid the price in the French Revolution. The Russia of the nineteenth century refused to mend her ways, and she paid the price in the Russian Revolution and is still paying a tremendous price in the confusion and tragedy of Russian life today. The Germany of the Kaiser and his group refused to mend her ways, and she is paying the price. What has been true of nations has been so much more true of individuals. There is a limit to the patience of God.—Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins.

The Cultivation of National Virtue. I wish to emphasize the necessity as well as the opportunity of deepening in our English-speaking world the sense of our duty, towards ourselves and those who come after us, of cultivating at this time rich and strengthening virtues in our democracies.

As an outcome of the recent war new conditions have been created which are favorable for the development of public and private virtue. Groping amid the ruins, a pensive world is reading the lesson of broken law, and is discovering once more that evil purposes and actions are bound to produce dire results. That which a nation soweth will it also reap. In Germany the three-headed hydra—Absolutism, Militarism, Capitalism, the creation and the master of greed and force—was allowed to control the nation, and such conscienceless rule knew no law. The results upon the people themselves have been deplorable. Henceforth we may expect in our time to hear little of the cynical philosophy that force is supreme in the world. Men who died to save our world order, those who have returned and those at home who suffered with them, have given us strong convictions as to the sacredness of Law.

In the First Epistle of Timothy, which contains much wisdom for readers who were thought to be living at a time when the world was slipping fast to ruin, there are three precepts which may give us suggestions. Of these the first is, "Teach healthy doctrine." As a result of the experience through which we have gone we have a new content in our healthy doctrine as it concerns national virtue. We are learning that it is the duty of an intelligent democracy to be very sincere and increasingly competent in understanding what the principles of morality really are. We have been plunged into an awful world distress because the healthy moral order of society was not accepted as a standard of life by the peoples of the earth. It has been burnt into the mind of our generation that the violation of Law brings terrible retribution.

The next precept is to "exercise unto godliness." Moral theory must be put into practice; what we believe to be right we must endeavor to incorporate into society, and democracy must strive to make the conditions of life not merely tolerable but just, so that multitudes will not live in a state of constant complaint against remediable grievances. As long as society permits injustices and evils to flourish, it will reap as a harvest a whirlwind of tempestuous rebellions which will tear up and lay waste the carefully cultivated fields of human endeavor.

The third ground for hope in the democracy is, I believe, to be found in the "mystery of godliness," or the secret of religion itself. Religion and reverence go together. It imparts Divine sanction to law and sacred authority to morals. The spirit of religion induces vitality in virtue and adapts it to adorn and to keep healthy the growing organism of life and society. Without religion democracy will lose the sense of reverence which underlies moral order.—Condensed from an Article in Religious Education, by Sir Robert A. Falconer.

For Discussion. 1. The Book of Lamentations an account of the events and the religious meaning of the fall of Jerusalem and the Captivity.

2. Looking back to the history of nations, we may date the beginning of their decline from the moment when they ceased to be reverent in heart, and accumulative in hand and brain.—Ruskin.

3. Deportations. What commercial purposes do they serve? What military purpose? Are they justifiable? The story of Evangeline. The deportation of the Belgians. The deportation of the Armenians. Our own deportations.

4. Treaty-breaking. Zedekiah's offence was intriguing with Egypt and breaking his treaty with Nebuchadnezzar. The "scrap of paper."

5. Buffer states. Judah was a "little nation" between the great nations of Egypt and Chaldea. Compare our present interest in those great nations of the past with our interest in the little buffer state about half as large as Massachusetts which stood for, and lost, and regained after her destruction, a Great Idea. Discuss the buffer states of the present, not forgetting Tibet, surrounded by China, Russia and Great Britain, and the phenomenal security of Switzerland in the Great War.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. As for repealing the law of retribution, we might as well undertake to repeal the law of gravitation.—William R. Huntington.

Sin can never be judged by its immediate effects, for it is a seed sown, and you have yet to learn what it will yield in the reaping time.—Dr. Marcus Dods.

He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck
Shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.—Prov. 29.1.

The wages of sin is death.—Paul.

The wages of sin are always paid: if there is any delay in settlement, compound interest is added.—The Youth's Companion.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XII. The Downfall of the Kingdom of Judah.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A NATION THAT DISOBEYED GOD

Beginning the Lesson. Among the treasures in the British Museum there is part of the head of a goddess carved in marble. This broken fragment was picked up in a temple in Greece, not far from Marathon, where the famous races were held. This goddess was named *Nemesis.* She was said to be the daughter of the god of might, and the old Greeks, and the Romans, too, were much afraid of her. She was the goddess of vengeance, and was supposed to pursue those people who had done wrong until they had been thoroughly punished for their wrong-doing. You see that the Greeks and the Romans had both found out that punishment of some kind always followed sin, and they put all the trouble down to this goddess, Nemesis.

What does our Golden Text say? You see the Bible teaches that it is the sin itself which brings the punishment. The people of Judah had sinned over and over again. They had neglected the worship of God, and had worshipped idols. And instead of living a good life, and keeping God's commandments, they had been wicked in every way. All sin brings punishment. The people would not listen to God's warning, and so at last he let the punishment fall upon them. Through whom did it come?—Condensed from an article by Grace Winter in The Sunday School Chronicle.

The Fate of a Nation that Disobeyed God. The siege of Jerusalem wore on, with misery indescribable. Little children, too young to understand, implored their parents to give them bread. They cried to their mothers, "Where is corn and wine?" But their mothers could not help them, and the children died in the streets.

Every place was full of dead and dying, the young and the old lying together on the ground, while those who died of hunger envied the shorter sufferings of those who died by the sword, for the famine was sore in the city.

For eighteen months Zedekiah held out. Then on the tenth day of the tenth month, at dead of night, the dreaded foe entered Jerusalem.

Before the conquering army could reach the palace, Zedekiah and his soldiers crept out in the darkness, through the palace garden, into a secret passage (doubtless he had prepared it for such an emergency) which led down to the city wall. So far their escape was easy. The danger began at the end of the passage. Trusting to the darkness, or to the carelessness of the sentries, the fugitives made a dash for the gate.

Zedekiah, like most feeble minds, could screw his courage up to foolhardy exploits; besides, he knew this was his only chance, which accounts for his unwonted decision. But alas for his hopes! The foe was on the alert. The runaways were seen, the signal was given. In a short time an army was pursuing the hapless king. Out in the plains of Jericho, forsaken by his soldiers, Zedekiah was overtaken, and marched like an ordinary prisoner, with his sons, to Nebuchadnezzar's camp in Riblah. On that dreadful journey Zedekiah wished he had listened to Jeremiah's advice. All the stories he had heard of Babylonian cruelty surged through his mind, as each step brought him nearer to his fate.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of fierce countenance, sat in judgment on the prisoners of war. His face was fierce indeed that day, for Zedekiah's rebellion and persistence had cost him greatly. The unfortunate king shrank before that cruel eye. He never had been one to look a man straight in the face.

"Look up!" cried Nebuchadnezzar.

Zedekiah looked up, and saw the most terrible sight he had ever seen. His ears heard the saddest cry they had ever heard. It was the dying cry of his own sons, put to death before his eyes. And all the remainder of his life that cry rang in his ears, and that cruel sight haunted his brain. It was the last

thing he ever saw on earth, for as he covered his face with his hands he, too, was seized and thrown to the ground, and by Nebuchadnezzar's orders his eyes were put out.

The rest of his story is this: His hands were bound in chains, he was marched to Babylon, and there he was left in prison, with his blindness and regrets, until the day of his death. So he came to Babylon as God had said, though he never did see it with his eyes.—Condensed from The Boiling Cauldron, by Lettice Bell.

The Departure for the Land of Exile. Recall the time when the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses escaped from Egyptian bondage, crossed the Red Sea and started for the Promised Land. Then recall a second glad procession that under Joshua's leadership crossed the Jordan and entered that land. Next recall the sad departure from Samaria of the northern tribes, who never came back, and the earlier procession that started from Jerusalem for the land of their captors. Now describe the last forced departure of the people of Judah, which fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the nation that would not repent and obey God's laws.

Retribution, though Long Delayed, is Sure. When the Superintendent of Schools of Kansas City was a sixteen-year-old boy he worked on a plantation in Arkansas. One day he was plowing with a mule and a cow, but the mule was often balky and gave his driver much trouble. After making many unsuccessful attempts to make the mule work, "Jim," as he was then called, took a rope and making a slip-knot in one end, placed it round the lower jaw of the mule, and tied the other end of the rope to the fetlock of that hind leg which was doing the kicking. Then he went back to the plow-handle, and gave the usual signal for the team to start. The mule immediately began to kick, but found that every motion of the hind leg pulled painfully upon the lower jaw, and the kicking stopped. Then Jim took off the rope, returned to the plow-handles, and repeated his command to go ahead. The team started at once, and plowed straight onward without any more kicking from the mule.

Would that every act of disobedience could bring at once upon each human being its fitting retribution! Because evil is not punished at once, many seem to believe that it never will be. Our lesson illustrates the truth that though "God's patience stretches from generation to generation, and his judgments tarry because he is not willing that any should perish, yet for all the long-suffering there comes a time when even Divine love sees that it is needful to say 'now' and the bolt falls."

A Lesson from a Sponge. A sponge had floated out with the undertow, feeling for a footing, and had at last drifted upon a young conch. Its gelatinous feelers had fastened on the cusp and had clung there, a naturalist explains. Thus anchored, the sponge grew and grew, careless of the discomfort that it caused the conch. Finally the conch, seeking to free itself of its burden, dug deep in the mud. Nature teaches these mollusks to clean their shells in this way. This exactly suited the sponge, for once rooted in the mud with such a burden on its back the conch could rise no more, and so, buried alive in the grave which it had dug for itself, it perished miserably. So sin fastens itself upon a young life, merely causing discomfort at first, but when permitted to stay and grow, it eventually drags that life down to a miserable death.

Written for Our Learning. Even to the very last, after all the deafness and deliberate disobedience, God still followed these foolish people with messages of love. All these "Never-Old Stories" of long ago were written on purpose for our learning. Each sermon and object-lesson Jeremiah gave is just as much for us as for those who actually heard them. Everything God did for Jeremiah he will do for all his servants still. The patience and longsuffering of God with the people who did not hear nor care, only shows us how he is waiting today for us to begin to call him our Father, and look to him to guide our lives.—Lettice Bell.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

> Lo! As hid seed shoots after rainless years,
> So good and evil, pains and pleasures, hates
> And loves, and all dead deeds, come forth again,
> Bearing bright leaves or dark, sweet fruit or sour.—Edwin Arnold.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XII. The Downfall of Judah.

REVIEW: JUDAH'S PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY

Golden Text

Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah. Psalm 33.12

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 65.1,2,8-13

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LESSONS FROM JUDAH'S HISTORY

I. "In thy name are we come against this multitude": who said this? Briefly tell the story. Luther might have said it, or Dickens, or Frances Willard: add other names to this list. (Read Whittier's Barclay of Ury.) Have you ever said it? Can any consistent Christian get through life without saying it?

II. What is treason? Was Jehoiada guilty of treason? Was Athaliah? Were Booth who killed Lincoln and Czolgosz who shot McKinley traitors? Were those who impeached President Andrew Johnson traitors? What is the difference? Read in an encyclopædia the story of Charlotte Corday. Can you imagine any circumstances under which those who should advocate destroying an American presidential administration by violence could be justified? Upon what do Americans believe that all government rests? On what did the Israelites think it rested? When would these beliefs mean the same?

III. If a ruler, or leader, or teacher wants to unite his subjects, or pupils, in hearty goodwill of the best sort, shall he set them to fighting with, or competing against, a common foe, or shall he get them to work with him for a common good? Which did Asa do? Which did Joash do? Give examples of each method from your own experience or observation.

IV. Compare Joash and Uzziah. What was the condition of the temple in the reign of each? What was the condition of the priesthood? What was the attitude of each king toward the temple? Toward the priests? What was the reward of each? As a rule, should the pastor of a church be his own Sunday-school superintendent? Lead the prayer-meetings? Why? Is it usually good for a church to have one very rich member? What are temptations? Is it good for a class to have one very clever student? For a boys' club to have one "strong man" as a member? Recall David Copperfield: why was it wrong for Mrs. Steerforth to put her boy into Salem House? How did the conduct of the priests in Uzziah's reign resemble that of Elisha toward Naaman? Was their haughtiness in each case for their own sake?

V. What prophet's mission on earth ended in a glorious experience? What prophet's mission began with a glorious experience? Did your experience as a Christian begin with a vision, shown to you personally? Of what value has that been to you through life? If you had no such uplifting vision, need you be any the less sure that you have a true message to deliver?

VI. When you look toward the future with hope, for what are you hoping—what are your visions? Does seeing the goal help those who run the race? What is the use of the imagination in a man's struggle for wealth or fame? "John is a mere drudge," says James. "James is so visionary," says John. Are these terms of reproach equally derogatory?

Do you ever indulge in visions of a bright future for any one but yourself? Do you include your family, or your country, or the world? If not, what may be the matter with you? Do visionaries nowadays carry any weight? Suppose a person with a vision has not the power or skill to bring his vision to pass, shall he destroy it?

You who read novels, poetry, your Bible, and who hear and see plays, lectures, pictures, sermons—where do you get your visions? "I am working on the Cathedral of St. John the Divine," said a man. "My father worked on it before me. Yes, they've altered the plans a little, I believe, but the whole thing is growing according to the original sketch." How many people do you know who are working toward making a vision come true that was sketched over twenty-five hundred years ago? How are they getting on? What is the matter?

"Man is a fighting animal." If men were to stop fighting each other, whom, or what, might they fight?

VII and VIII. Compare Hezekiah with Joash. How were their tasks alike? Does Josiah, the king to whom Hilkiah's manuscript was taken, belong to this group? Which of the three did the greatest service? Why?

IX. Compare the ninth lesson of this Quarter and the third lesson of the First Quarter to show that history repeats itself—with a difference.

X. Compare Amos and Jeremiah as to their prophecies, the reception of their prophecies, and their fulfilment. What do you know of the Zionist movement of the present day? Tell the incident which lets us see our Bible in the making.

XI. What effect had persecution upon Jeremiah? What did Galileo say after he recanted? Can you eradicate any one's ideas by punishing him? What is the best way to get any one to change his mind? When the Salvation Army began to exhort and pray on the streets of American cities, some members were imprisoned. Why are they not so treated now? What have they proved about the "foolishness of preaching"?

XII. It is a sin not to use your *mind*. Zedekiah was "criminally foolish." As Dr. F. B. Meyer says: "The drunken captain may cut in pieces the chart that tells of the rocks in the vessel's course, and put in irons the sailor who calls his attention to it; but neither will avert the crash that must ensue unless the helm is turned."

Read Whittier's Poor Voter on Election Day. Do you find the history of Israel and of Judah useful to you personally? Are you a king or a queen?

If every one in this country were to make and keep these resolutions: (1) I will not set up any altars to false gods; (2) I will not, as I worship the true God, shut my eyes to the fact that the altars of the false gods still stand in this land; (3) If I myself see a vision to hope for, or hear the voice of God bidding me speak in warning, I will say, "Here am I, send me"; (4) If I hear another crying aloud an invitation or a condemnation, I will pause and hearken and weigh and consider—then what would happen in this our land? How might it affect the world?

A Review by Means of Allusions. To transform a sword into a pruning hook is a matter for a skilled smith, but to change a bayonet into a poker is within the capacity of the least mechanical.—Samuel McChord Crothers.

Take the task he gives you gladly,
Let his work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly, when he calleth,
"Here am I, send me, send me."—Daniel March.

A Daniel come to Judgment! Yea, a Daniel!
O wise young Judge, how I do honor thee.—Shakespeare.

The Nebuchadnezzars are God's axes with which he hews down fruitless trees. They are responsible for their acts, but they are his instruments, and it is his hand that wields them.—Maclaren.

He who shows me the achievements of a brother man touches my lips with a live coal from off the altar.—Carlyle.

He was a great scholar; he made a huge fortune; he rose to be a peer; she was a noted beauty, a leader of fashion, a queen of society—what will all such epitaphs be worth, if God's finger carves silently below them, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord"?—Maclaren.

With bonds, and scorn, and evil will
The world requites its prophets still.—Whittier.

The Vulgate, with its mutilations and excisions, is a standing evidence that Jehudi's penknife survived his age.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Subjects for Five Minute Papers. 1. The Relations of Judah to the Great Powers.

2. The History of Judah and Israel Compared.
3. Josiah's and Jehoiakim's Treatment of the Word of God.
4. The Prophet Isaiah.
5. The Prophet Jeremiah.
6. How the Book of Jeremiah was Written.

7. The Object Lessons in This Quarter's Lessons, from Jonah's Gourd to Judah's Captivity.

8. God's Judgment and Mercy upon Judah.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When and why did Ezekiel go to Babylon? 2. Read Jeremiah's characterization of the first exiles in Jer. 24. 3. Read Jer. 29, Jeremiah's pastoral letter to the first exiles. 4. Read the first three chapters of Ezekiel. 5. What does the first chapter describe? 6. How do you understand the title here of "Son of man"? 7. With Ezekiel's vision compare the theophanies by which Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah were strengthened for their mission. 8. Why did Ezekiel spend a week in silence at Tel-abib? 9. How were the dangers of his mission symbolized? 10. Where and under what circumstances did Ezekiel carry out the Divine commission? 11. What was the main purpose of his messages? 12. Have you any responsibilities of a Christian watchman?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS
TRUE AND FALSE LEADERS OF JUDAH

True Kings of Judah. 1. Name four rulers of Judah who obeyed God.

2. Who declared "In thy name are we come against this multitude"? What was the result of the battle?

3. Who repaired the temple under the advice of a good priest? In what way did he fall short of being completely loyal?

4. Who reinstituted the Passover? How did the people feel about it?

5. Under whom was the Book of the Law found? What did the king do about it? How was his good conduct rewarded?

6. On the whole, did these four rulers prosper or suffer because of their loyalty to God?

False Kings of Judah. 1. Name four rulers of Judah who disobeyed God.

2. Who began well and ended ill? What was his sin? What was his punishment?

3. Who was a murderer? What was the retribution? Who brought it about?

4. Who destroyed the word of God? How had it been written? How successful was this destruction? How was this king punished?

5. Who "blew hot and cold" about obeying God? What advisers had he on the two sides? With which side did he finally cast his lot? What was his fate?

6. On the whole, did these four rulers prosper or suffer because of their disloyalty to God?

Prophets of Judah. 1. What prophets lived in Judah during these times?

2. Who warned against disobedience and foretold calamities that would follow sin?

3. Who, while foretelling final disaster because of sin, declared God's mercy to those who forsook their sins?

4. Who saw beautiful visions of a good time that would at last come? Tell some of his visions. Have they come true yet?

5. Who gladly responded to God's call?

6. Who was steadfastly obedient in the face of much danger? Was the danger real?

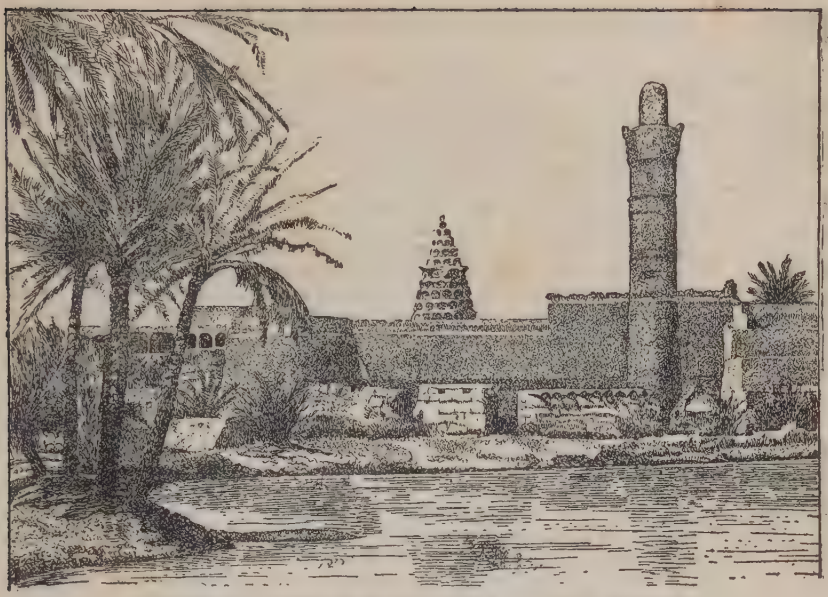
Priests of Judah. 1. Who saved Joash? Who put him on the throne and advised him?

2. Did the priests lead Hezekiah, or did he lead them? Did they respond well?

3. How did the priests in Josiah's reign behave?

4. How did the priests seem to feel toward Jeremiah?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When did Ezekiel go to Babylon? 2. Where was Babylon? 3. What counsel did the prophet Jeremiah give the exiles in a letter? (Jer. 29.1,5). 4. Read Whittier's poem of Ezekiel. 5. Who is the speaker in Ezek. 2.1? 6. What responsibility was Ezekiel's? 7. What is a watchman for? 8. What is the duty of a sentry at a military camp? 9. What do Ezek. 1.3; 3.15; 29.17; 40.1 tell us about the prophet Ezekiel? 10. Who was the first man in the Bible who was taught by God that he was responsible for his brother? (Gen. 4.9). 11. Have we any similar responsibility toward others? 12. If it falls to our lot to warn others, in what spirit should we give the warning?



TRADITIONAL TOMB OF EZEKIEL NEAR ANCIENT BABYLON

THIRD QUARTER

THE EXILE AND THE RESTORATION

LESSON I—JULY 2

EZEKIEL, THE WATCHMAN OF ISRAEL

Golden Text

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55.6,7

LESSON Ezekiel 2.1 to 3.27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 121

REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Kings 17.13,14; Isaiah 6.1-13; Jeremiah 1.1-19; Ezekiel 33.1-6; Matthew 23.37-39; Acts 20.18-21,26,27,29-31

EZEKIEL 2.1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. 2 And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this very day. 4 And the children are impudent and stiff-hearted: I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. 5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. 6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns are with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

3.17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. 20 Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thy hand. 21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and thou hast delivered thy soul.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. EZEKIEL'S CALL AND COMMISSION, 2.1-7. In the first chapter Ezekiel describes the indescribable—the complicated vision which he had of God—the wonderful chariot, the fiery cloud, the four living creatures, in their midst the perpetual flash of lightning and the glow of fire, above them the crystal firmament, upon it a sapphire throne, and on the throne Almighty God himself. Before such a vision, no wonder the prophet fell prostrate upon his face. The awful silence was broken by the voice of God bidding him stand upon his feet and receive his commission for service. *Son of man, stand upon thy feet:* more important than the attitude of worship is the attitude of readiness for action. The term *son of man,* which occurs nearly one hundred times in the Book of Ezekiel, is equivalent to "member of the human race, mortal," and shows Ezekiel's realization of his own frailty in contrast with his vision of the majesty of God. *And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet.* "This is the Divine energy, enabling a man to come to the height of his manhood, and so to find readiness to hear the word of the Lord" (Morgan). The service to which God called the prophet was to proclaim to the rebellious Israelites the *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah,* the Divine message, which is, first of all, a message of doom, verse 10. The Israelites have been rebellious throughout their national history; they are *impudent and stiffhearted* and they may not listen, but Ezekiel must not be disturbed by their words and looks, even though *briers and thorns* are with him, and he dwells *among scorpions*—symbols of the opposition he may meet.

II. EZEKIEL'S INSPIRATION, 2.8 to 3.3. His inspiration is suggestively described by the swallowing of a book-roll. "The *lamentations, mourning, and woe* inscribed in the visionary book do, in point of fact, faithfully describe the general contents and temper of Ezekiel's message throughout the earlier part of his ministry and the first half of his book, that is, down to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. This conception of inspiration implies that the message he is to deliver must be his own. It is God's ultimately, but Ezekiel must make it his own, work it into the very life of his being, assimilate it, as we should say—this is the meaning of the strong language in 3.3—until it is himself that he is uttering. When he eats the roll, bitter as are its contents, it is as sweet as honey in his mouth, for it is sweet to do the will of God and to be trusted with tasks for him" (Peake).

III. THE STERNNESS OF THE TASK, 3.4-11. "He is sent to a stubborn people who will be infinitely less responsive to the Divine message than heathen foreigners would have been. But with resolute face the prophet is to go forward to meet their hard and resolute faces, and fearlessly deliver the message of God who has called and can equip and sustain him."

IV. THE REACTION, 3.12-15. "That, then, was the summons he seemed to hear from the awful Figure upon the throne of the mysterious chariot. Then once more the whirr of the wings and the roar of the wheels were heard, and the chariot departed, leaving the prophet, on return to normal consciousness, in a state of reaction graphically described as bitterness and heat of spirit. In this mood he found his way to Tel-abib, a colony of his fellow-exiles, apparently at or near his home, where he remained for a week in a state of utter stupefaction, dumb and motionless" (Peake).

V. THE PASTORAL CHARGE: A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY, 3.16-21. At the end of a week Ezekiel receives another Divine message: *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel,* and a watchman's duty is to warn of danger. *The wicked shall surely die,* and if the prophet fails to warn them, he will be held responsible for their fate, *his blood will I require at thy hand.* Compare Acts 18.6. If, however, the prophet fails not in his duty of warning, then he *has delivered his soul:* see Ezekiel 14.14; 1 Tim. 4.16. The warning was Ezekiel's duty but not the success of the warning.

"Out! out to brave the odds!
'Tis well. Up with the sail! The wind is God's!"

The righteous must be warned not to swerve from the path of righteousness when God shall *lay a stumbling block before him,* something which causes him to stumble and fall. "This difficult phrase does not mean that God seeks to make the righteous fall, but that the temptations of the righteous are under God's providential control. Where there is a temptation he also sends a warning, and the two constitute a discipline by which the righteous man is tested, and under which he has an opportunity of moral growth" (Dummelow). "Only when the righteous is seen maintaining his righteousness unto the end can the watchman feel that he has delivered his own soul in regard to him. Like a ship laden with a precious freight, the other has to be anxiously piloted into the haven" (Davidson). "For the first time in Hebrew history the prophet becomes the pastor; he has the care of souls" (Peake).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, 3.17. A modern policeman walking about the streets among the people, while no enemy is near to make anybody afraid, furnishes a very poor illustration and gives a very poor idea of the spectacular position and performance of the watchman of an ancient city. When a city lay in slumber it was behind high, strong walls. The great gates were fast closed and barred. About those gates at any time might gather an armed host, the greatest precaution having been taken that no advance notice of its coming should be given. So, while the city slumbered, the watchman watched upon the walls.—M. G. Kyle.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How many were the deportations to Babylon from Judah? Who were carried away captive with Jehoiakim? Describe Babylon.

Ezekiel, the Prophet of the Exile. About two-thirds of all the Jewish exiles in Babylon were in the first deportation with Jehoiachin, 597 B. C. They were the leading Jews, princes and officers, soldiers and artisans; Ezekiel (17.3-6, 12-14) calls them the best of the nation, and Jeremiah calls them "very good figs, first ripe," in contrast to the "very bad figs" who were left in Judah. They fared better in Babylon than did the second group of exiles after the fall of Jerusalem eleven years later. During the first ten years of the exile, at least, the Jews kept in close touch with their kinsmen in Judah. The prophet Jeremiah advised them in a letter to build houses and dwell in them, to plant gardens and eat the fruit, to rear up families, to avoid insurrection, to find their prosperity in the city to which they had been carried. Though they were homesick for their land and city and temple, their material prosperity in Babylon seems to have been far greater than at home.

In this first company of exiles was the young priest Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, who five years later, 592 B. C., received his call to the prophet's office. In the first three chapters of Ezekiel we have his account of the call, the vision and commission. Keep in mind that this occurred before the destruction of Jerusalem, our lesson of two weeks ago.

For six years from that time, until the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel denounced the sins of the people that were leading the nation to destruction. The first twenty-four chapters of the Book of Ezekiel record these warnings. After the fall of Jerusalem, this interpreter of God's will to the Babylonian exiles becomes a preacher of hope.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of the lesson is by the river Chebar (Ezek. 1.1), and later (3.15) at Tel-abib, by that river. The name Tel-abib probably means "Hill of the Deluge," a name given in Babylonia to the many mounds formed by the disastrous flood that had swept over the face of the land before the establishment of a system of irrigation. The exact location of Tel-abib is unknown, but it was in the fertile land between the Euphrates and Tigris, not far to the east of Babylon and closely connected with it by canals. In two tablets excavated at Nippur (south of Babylon) dated in the reign of Artaxerxes I (464-424 B. C.), there is a reference to the large navigable canal Chebar.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Today we find it helpful to call in the aid of illustration, and we will consider how to make an illustration to fit the lesson. And first, what is the purpose of the illustration? It is to embody moral instruction—which is abstract and therefore hard to grasp and uninteresting—in a concrete form which is easy to grasp and is interesting; at the same time it clarifies the instruction and is also a powerful aid to memory. It should have features that correspond to the points we wish to impress, and sufficient details to make it interesting, but not details that overweight it and thereby distract attention from the essential points.

The points of the second part of our lesson are: (1) the servant of God is a watchman; (2) he shall warn; (3) if he does not, he is responsible for the ruin of souls; (4) if he does, he shall be clear, even though his warning is unheeded. The teacher looks at these points and begins to search his recollection of various kinds of watchmen for one that will fit the case; he thinks of the sentry, the old city watch, the night-watchman in a factory, but they hardly fit; then he recollects the lighthouse keeper, and he fits all four points: (1) he is continually on the watch when on duty; (2) he lights his lamp every night to warn sailors off the rocks; (3) if he fails to do so and a vessel perishes, he is responsible for all the lives lost; (4) if, however, they do not heed his warning light, he cannot help them and they perish, but he has done his part and he is clear.—W. D. Bavin.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE DUTY OF WARNING OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with "Ezekiel the Prophet of the Exile," Historical Background.

Whittier represents the prophet Ezekiel as speaking as follows:—

A sad and thoughtful youth, I went
With Israel's early banishment;
And where the sullen Chebar crept,
The ritual of my fathers kept.
The water for the trench I drew,
The firstling of the flock I slew,
And, standing at the altar's side,
I shared the Levite's lingering pride,
That still, amidst her mocking foes,
The smoke of Zion's offering rose.

In sudden whirlwind, cloud and flame
The Spirit of the Highest came!
Before mine eyes a vision passed,
A glory terrible and vast;
With dreadful eyes of living things,
And sounding sweep of angel wings,
With circling light and sapphire throne
The flame-like form of One thereon,
And voice of that dread Likeness sent
Down from the crystal firmament!

The burden of a prophet's power
Fell on me in that fearful hour;

How Ezekiel Lived up to his Responsibility. Grandmother had gone downstairs for a few minutes, leaving Katharine using a magnet to sail some tin ducks in a bowl of water. When her grandfather looked up from his book she had succeeded in drenching herself from head to foot. "Why, why!" he exclaimed in dismay, "What will grandma say now?" "Oh!" said the little girl instantly, "she will scold you for letting me do it!"

Are the prophets to be held responsible for letting the church of Israel sin? Our half-year's study has shown us how constantly they warned the people, and how continually the people "hardened their hearts." The prophet Ezekiel was not held responsible for results; he was responsible only for effort.

"No prophet ever took himself or his call more seriously," writes Dr. A. S. Peake in his Commentary on the Bible. "He devoted to his ministry all the powers of mind, heart, and imagination. He pleaded with individual souls; he preached to the people—and there is proof that he was a most attractive preacher (33.32); and he planned for the national reconstruction in that future in which, even when the outlook was blackest, he never ceased to believe. No influence was more potent than his in the shaping of that Judaism which has lived on unshaken through the centuries. It is seen in his transcendental conception of God, in whose presence Ezekiel feels himself to be but a poor frail 'son of man.' It is seen in his dogma of individual retribution. It is seen in his apocalyptic vision of the great assault to be made one day upon the holy land by heathen hordes, who will in the end be defeated ignominiously and forever. It is seen above all in his passionate love of a minutely-organized worship, which perhaps no single thinker did so much to shape and guide as he. When we consider the hopes he encouraged, the movements he initiated, the visions he held before the eyes of his contemporaries, the influence he has exerted on posterity, we cannot deny him a place in the front rank of the great men of Israel."

There is Such a Thing as "Blood-Guiltiness." A phrase which our fathers often used, is not heard today frequently, about the work of the prophet. I refer to the phrase "blood-guiltiness." Yet that phrase finds its warrant in this paragraph. There is such a thing. If the wicked die in wickedness for lack of the prophetic word, the prophet is guilty of his blood. If the righteous man fall into sin because the prophet fails to warn him of his peril, the prophet is held responsible for his perishing. If the wicked or the righteous sin and die, in spite of the prophet's warning, then is the prophet not guilty. Verily to a prophet silence may be sin; to withhold the word of the Lord from fear or for favor, is to be involved in the wickedness of the evildoers. All this gives the most solemn pause to those responsible for speaking the words of God to men.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

There is No Responsibility for God's Part. A number of men were once talking about the burdens of duty, and one of them declared that they were sometimes too heavy to be borne. "Not," said another, "if you carry only your own burden, and don't try to take God's work out of his hands. Last year I crossed the Atlantic with one of the most skilful and faithful captains of the great liners. We had a terrific storm during which for thirty-eight hours he remained on the bridge, striving to save his passengers. When the danger was over I said to him, 'It must be a terrible thought at such a time that you are responsible for the lives of over a thousand human beings.' 'No,' he said solemnly, 'I am not responsible for the life of one man on this ship. My responsibility is to run the ship with all the skill and faithfulness possible to any man. God himself is responsible for all the rest.'"—The Christian Age.

Dr. Hale's Responsibility. A number of years ago a young thief was caught in the act of committing burglary in the home of Edward Everett Hale in Roxbury. Many believed that Dr. Hale, so well known for his love of mankind, would not appear against him. But on the contrary, Dr. Hale took an active part in having the burglar committed to the reformatory. He believed that the law ought to take its course; and he testified against the prisoner himself, so that the thief was sent to the reformatory for three years.

But though Dr. Hale upheld the law, he did not any the less fail to care for the youthful criminal. Busy as he was, he took time every week, during the three years, to write personally to the thief, trying to wake up his self-respect and stimulate his courage. When the time was up he had secured a good position for the former law-breaker. The young burglar, who had come to regard him as his truest friend, went into the new position, proved himself worthy

of it, and became a useful, honest, self-respecting man. A weak mercy might have let him slip back into crime. A loving justice saved him.

It would have been far easier for Dr. Hale to have let him go at first. It would have saved the trouble of thinking about him and planning for him during three years. It would also have seemed more kind to many unthinking people. There is a great deal of so-called "kindness" in the world today along just such labor-saving lines. To love our fellow-man actively and wisely is a great deal of trouble. To love them passively and weakly is no trouble at all in comparison. But it is the sort of love that is the fulfilling of the law that pays—pays just because it costs.—The Wellspring.

The Sin of Cain. What is the peculiar sin of the social environment of education? It is the sin of irresponsibility, the temptation to the self-centered, self-sufficient, and self-absorbed career. A schoolboy, coming from a comfortable home, is from the beginning of his education tempted to think with seriousness of little except his own lessons, his own sport, his own allowance of money, his own vacation; and when his holidays arrive, an adoring family are apt to increase this tendency to self-reverence. A young man coming to college has for his central problems his own studies, his own advancement, his own companionships, his own career. It is the same even with the scholar's life. He is an isolated person. There is an essential solitude in the higher learning, and the scholar is sorely tempted to shut out from himself the things of the world, and to ask of public interests or obligations, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

I remember, at a time when fidelity and public spirit were much needed among us, that a father said: "I told my boy not to get mixed up in the matter"; and one ally of righteousness was lost to us through his father's fault. The sin of the father was visited upon the son, and the brother's blood cried out to him from the ground.

And on the other hand, many a timid, lonely, and disheartened boy among us has been steadied and strengthened, not by any patronage or posing or parade, but simply by the strength of the brother's hand, and the sense of the brother at his side. When Henry Drummond of Glasgow was here some years ago, he told us of a young American student in Scotland who had received his Bachelor's degree, but who, on returning for a further year of study, failed to receive the higher degree at the year's close. It was not until years afterward that Drummond knew how that apparently unproductive year had been spent. At last a man confessed to Drummond that he had been tempted while in Glasgow by the drink-habit, and that the young American came back to help him. He did not lecture or preach, but became the room-mate of his friend, and throughout the year held him to his best and steadied him in his resolution, until at last the devil of drink was expelled, and the man who had come so near to ruin dedicated himself to the career of a medical missionary. Then the American was ready to return to his country, having missed his Master's degree, but having won his brother's soul.—Dr. Francis Greenwood Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

How to Reprove. We have not always to be indulging in quieting words of comfort; we are to use the clarion, and arouse men out of sleep. But our reproof must be backed by our lives. Our condemnation must be pervaded by grace. We must not move among men as critics and cynics, but as friends who honestly seek their good. Our swords must be dipped into the healing virtues of love. Our reproofs must be medicated and so heal the very wounds they make. Surely this is a ministry worthy of the followers of Christ—to do the difficult thing, and to speak the difficult word. One thing is very sure: the world is waiting for such disciples.—J. H. Jowett.

For Discussion. 1. Ezekiel the Churchman. See Chapter IX of Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Dr. Rogers.

2. Professor Toy calls this chapter "the earliest known formulation of moral responsibility of man for man." "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a question asked in the childhood of the race: it is a question which we in this day are taking more and more seriously.

3. Two attitudes of mind in the experience of religion, adoration and inspiration. First a man bows in worship and falls on his face before the glory of God; then God says: "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." First there is prostration, receptivity, prayer; then there is expectancy, alertness,

obedience. First the eyes are closed before the splendor of God; then the eyes are opened to meet God's command. First one bows as a worshipper; then one stands as a soldier. It is a beautiful picture of the complete religious life. Many people fancy that religion is fulfilled in the bowing of the head and the saying of prayers. They go to church and participate in worship, and return to their lives with an impression that their religion is disposed of, as Daniel Webster is reported to have signed a business note and said, "Thank Heaven, that money is paid." The prophet does not depreciate these forms of worship. They are an essential part of religious expression. If he had not bowed before the vision of God, he would not have heard the later message, "Stand upon thy feet." Many people fancy, on the other hand, that religion is completely expressed in conduct, fidelity, obedience. *"Laborare est orare,"* they say. "Why waste time in worship when there is so much work waiting to be done?" Here also the prophet's teaching recognizes truth. If he had not stood upon his feet, the vision would have been in vain.—Professor Greenwood Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Into what two parts does the Book of Daniel fall, and what is the character of each? 2. For what purpose was the book probably written? 3. What were the three kingdoms typified by the metals silver, brass, and iron? 4. What does the mysterious stone signify? 5. What philosophy of history has the book? 6. What is the thought of our text as to God's world kingdom? 7. What does Dan. 4.34,35 say about God's world kingdom? 8. What is said in Isa. 9.6,7 about the Messiah and his kingdom? 9. What are some of the things which Jesus said about the kingdom of God? 10. What did he say in John 18.33-38? 11. What indications have we had this year of the progress of God's world kingdom?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
FACING A HARD TASK

Beginning the Lesson. From time to time a number of beautiful pictures have been stolen from the Louvre at Paris and now the authorities keep two watchdogs in the galleries at night which no thief could prevent from giving warning of his presence. The prophet Isaiah once accused the priests of his day of being like dumb watchdogs who did not bark.

In the Book of Ezekiel we hear that the prophet of the Lord could not be dumb, that it was his task to warn the people. Where was Ezekiel when he told of the lesson he had had from God? (Historical Background and Text Explained.)

I Have Made Thee a Watchman. Every inch of our great Pennsylvania Railroad is patrolled day and night. (So was Israel's way. Ezekiel was down along the line to make known the dangers.) But the engineer did not heed the red and the wreck came. As I write there lies dead in Coatesville one of the oldest and best of the Reading engineers. He was killed yesterday by his engine running into an open switch. Cause of the wreck—the yard watchman did not warn of the open switch.

Elmer Kline was drowned because he didn't know the ice was rotten and nobody warned him. Most mistakes in life are due to sheer ignorance. The faithful word would save thousands. As I came down the street I saw Tom Barker talking with a bunch of tough boys. When I next saw Tom, I said, "Old fellow, you are too good a man for that trash." That word turned him, and he later came into the church. You have Toms all around you.—Condensed from an article in the Sunday School Times, by Wm. H. Ridgway.

The Duty of Protest. Whitefield and a pious companion were much annoyed one night at a public-house by a set of blaspheming gamblers in a room adjoining where they slept. "I will go and reprove them," said Whitefield. His companion remonstrated with him in vain. He went, but his words were unavailing. "What have you got by it?" said the other. "A soft pillow," he patiently replied, and soon fell asleep.

Do you Obey your Watchman, Conscience? It is said that an Indian once asked a white man to give him a pipeful of tobacco, and received a loose handful from his pocket. The next day the Indian came back and asked for the white man, "for (said he) I found a quarter of a dollar in the tobacco." "Why don't you keep it?" asked a person standing by. "Because I've got a

good man here and a bad man here," said the Indian, pointing to his breast, "and the good man say, 'It is not yours; give it back to the owner.' The bad man say, 'No, no, you must keep it.' So I did not know what to do, and I thought to go to sleep; but the good man and the bad man kept talking all night, and troubled me; and now, when I bring the money back, I feel good."

Facing a Hard Task. One who has the spirit of the self-righteous Pharisee, the holier-than-thou attitude, cannot wisely warn another of sin. Love must prompt and guide the one who gives the warning. It is not easy to accept reproof from another, even when our conscience tells us that it is merited, but when we see that the other has only our best good at heart, we can be great enough to receive it in the spirit given, and profit from it.

A writer in The Youth's Companion gives this school incident:—

Cara Willis, half-startled, half-amused, faced the messengers. It was the first time that she had been summoned—of course it was some joke. She tossed aside her calculus.

"What is the charge?" she asked.

"You will hear in court," they answered. It seemed to Cara that they were embarrassed.

The court was sitting when they entered. Again it seemed to Cara that there was a curious air of constraint in the room.

"Upon what charge am I summoned, your honor?" she asked.

"The clerk will read the charges."

The clerk rose. She adored Cara Willis, and her voice actually trembled.

"Whereas"—the girls were not particularly strong upon legal formulæ—"it has been declared by witnesses that upon January 20th Cara Willis kept Mrs. Alvord standing in a drafty hall ten minutes while she was saying good-by, in consequence of which, said Mrs. Alvord was ill with a cold and had to give up a trip she had planned;

"And whereas, upon the 25th, Cara Willis, calling upon May Carver 'just for a moment,' unlawfully detained her eleven moments, thus causing her to miss her trolley and lose half of her concert;

"And whereas, Cara Willis, one day later, January 26th, held Ellen Frisbie in conversation upon the door-steps seven minutes, thus making her miss her train and an appointment in town;

"And whereas, it is the habit of Cara Willis always and everywhere to spend from seven to twenty-seven minutes saying good-by, thus causing endless inconvenience to her friends and acquaintances,

"Therefore she is summoned before the high court to declare if there is any reason why she—the said Cara Willis—should not be considered a thief, and receive due punishment for her crime."

The room was very still. Cara Willis looked about the circle. She was not laughing now; in the flushed, entreating faces she read how hard it had been for them, her friends.

"You are," she said slowly, "the pluckiest dears I ever knew. I—I never knew I was like that. The prisoner pleads guilty."

Then suddenly—it was most disorderly—the court broke into cheers.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Where we disavow
Being keeper to our brother we're his Cain.—George Eliot.

It needs a very humble tongue on the one hand, as well as a very humble ear on the other, to speak and to hear words of reproof.—Dr. Hugh Black.

God is the Governor-general, and I am only the agent by whom he designs to work his will.—General Gordon.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. Begin a third note-book and entitle it "The Exile and the Restoration." Today write I. How the Prophet Ezekiel Learned the Duty of Warning Others.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In whose reign was Daniel taken to Babylon, and by whom? (Dan. 1.1). 2. Where was Babylon, and what sort of city was it? 3. How did Daniel take a firm stand for the right soon after reaching Babylon? 4. What did he "purpose in his heart"? 5. What test did he stand? 6. Tell Nebuchadnezzar's dream. 7. What was the lesson of the dream? 8. How do the first six chapters of Daniel differ from the rest of the book?

DANIEL INTERPRETING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Golden Text

The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11.15

LESSON Daniel 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-10

REFERENCE MATERIAL Isaiah 9.6,7; 13; 14; 47; Daniel 4.30,34-37; John 18.33-38; Revelation 11.15

DANIEL 2.36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; 38 and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay. 44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

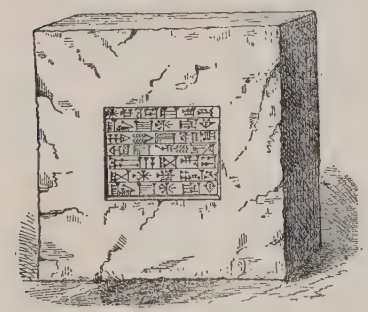
I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FORGOTTEN DREAM AND HIS THREAT TO THE MAGICIANS, verses 1-12. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, dreamed a dream which he could not recall upon awaking, and *his spirit was troubled, and his sleep went from him.* "His state of mind on waking is a psychological condition with which we are all familiar. We awake in a tremor. We have seen something which disquieted us, but we cannot recall what it was; we have had a frightful dream, but we can only remember the terrifying impression which it has left upon our minds" (Farrar). Accordingly, the King summoned the Magi, or wise men, of his realm and demanded that they tell him both his dream and its interpretation. They declared his demand an impossible one: if he would tell the dream, they would interpret it. The unreasonable king became furious, declared them impostors, and ordered them all to be slain, which was quite in keeping with the character of a despotic monarch, who would brook no opposition to his will and who held human life very cheap.

II. DANIEL'S VISION, verses 13-23. The decree was to be carried out. Among the wise men of the realm sought for were Daniel and his companions. Daniel secured from the king a brief respite. Daniel went to his three com-

panions and told them to join in prayer to God, that he would make known to them the dream and thus spare their lives. God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel in a vision of the night and Daniel gave praise and thanks for this favor.

III. DANIEL MAKES KNOWN THE KING'S DREAM, verses 24-35. No *wise men, enchanters, magicians, soothsayers* could tell the king his dream, said Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar when brought into his presence, that dream by which God had *made known to the king what shall be in the latter days.* God had revealed the secret to himself (Daniel), but not because of any wisdom of his own. It was a huge, terrible colossus that the king had seen in his dream, its *head was of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its feet of iron, and part of clay.* Then the king had seen a stone, not hewn by human hands, smite the feet of the image and break them to pieces, when the image had fallen, its shattered ruins becoming *like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away:* but *the stone became a mountain and filled the whole earth.*

IV. DANIEL INTERPRETS THE KING'S DREAM, verses 36-48. *Thou, O King,* said Daniel, *the king of kings,* the ruler over the *beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens and the children of men, art the head of gold.* Three inferior kingdoms should follow the Babylonian Empire, represented by the inferior metals silver, brass and iron. The second empire is usually considered the Median, the third the Persian, and the fourth the Græco-Macedonian. "The second is either the Median rule of Darius, which the writer of Daniel mistakenly supposed to come before that of Cyrus the Persian (8.20), or the kingdom of Belshazzar, who is contrasted with Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 5: the third is either the Persian empire, beginning with Cyrus, or the Medo-Persian empire, which is represented by a single animal (the ram) in chapter 8" (One Volume Commentary). The fourth kingdom, that of the Greek empire which was founded by the conquests of Alexander the Great, was fittingly described as of iron that *breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things. The feet and toes,* partly of clay and partly of iron represent Alexander's empire as broken up after his death: "there were elements both of strength and weakness in the rival kingdoms of the Seleucidæ and Ptolemies." *They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men* "refers to royal marriages by which these kingdoms sought to establish alliance" (One Volume Commentary). The mysterious rock-fragment, *the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands* which broke in pieces *the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold,* represents the Messianic Kingdom, a kingdom which shall supersede all kingdoms and shall stand for ever. This is the first announcement of a "kingdom of heaven." *The God of heaven* shall set up this kingdom, and its *sovereignty* shall not be *left to another people,* Daniel further adds. "The Messianic Kingdom will be in the hands, not of foreigners, but of Jews. Both the national limitation and the foreshortening of view in this verse are characteristic of Old Testament prophecy, and do not affect the value of the central truth which is taught" (One Volume Commentary).



Brick on which the Name Nebuchadnezzar Is Stamped

The Great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the *dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure,* said Daniel in conclusion. The king recognized the truth of these words, fell down and did obeisance to Daniel as the ambassador of God, acknowledged also by his words the greatness of the true God, and rewarded Daniel by making him governor of the province of Babylon and the chief of the wise men.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

If ye make not known unto me the dream and the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, verse 5. The language was that of brutal despotism such

as had been customary for centuries among the ferocious tyrants of Assyria. The punishment of dismemberment, or death by mutilation, was common among them, and had constantly been depicted on their monuments. It was doubtless known to the Babylonians also, they being familiar with the apathetic cruelty of the East.—Dr. F. W. Farrar.

God hath made known to Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days, verse 28. There was nothing strange in the notion that God should have vouchsafed a prophetic dream to a heathen potentate. Such instances had already been recorded in the case of Pharaoh (Gen. 41), and in the case of Abimelech (Gen. 20.5-7). It was also a Jewish tradition that Pharaoh Necho had sent a warning to Josiah not to advance against him to the Battle of Megiddo. Such dreams are recorded in the cuneiform inscriptions as having occurred to Assyrian monarchs.—Dr. F. W. Farrar.

Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, verse 46. Instead of the courtier falling prostrate before the king and touching the ground with his forehead as he makes obeisance, Nebuchadnezzar reverses the rôle, and falls down before the wise man. There are other parallel instances in history. Josephus tells us that when Alexander the Great in his march of conquest visited Jerusalem and the temple, and the high-priest brought out and read to him the prophecies of Daniel, the great soldier-king prostrated himself before the priest, in recognition of the Divine authorship of the prediction.—E. C. Tristram.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When was the first deportation from Judah to Babylon? Under what king? From what prophetical books have we had lessons? Who was the prophet of Israel? Who, the prophet of Judah? Who, the prophet of the Exile?

The Prophet Daniel. Again we turn backward in our history, this time to the reign of Jehoiakim. It was in the third year of his reign, 606 B. C., that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, first besieged Jerusalem and carried back with him to Babylon some Jewish captives, together with some of the treasures of the temple. Recall our lesson for June 11, p. 214. Among the captives was Daniel, a descendant of one of the highest families in Jerusalem (Dan. 1.3), and then but a boy, according to Jerome.

In Babylon Daniel was educated. He gained great favor with Nebuchadnezzar the King, and was later appointed by him governor of the province of Babylon. He lived till the reign of Cyrus the Great. A tomb in Susa is claimed by Mohammedans as the tomb of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel. The book consists of two distinct parts, wholly different in character. In the first part the stories told about Daniel and his fellow exiles in Babylon are simply told, yet with great dramatic power. The second part consists of a series of visions, and is rhetorical in style.

The Purpose of the Book of Daniel. The fall of the Kingdom of Israel, completed by the destruction of Samaria at the hands of the Assyrians under Sargon, was in 722 B. C.; the fall of the Kingdom of Judah, completed by the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, was in 586 B. C.; the exiled Jews were permitted to return to their own land in subjection to the Persians under Cyrus, in 536 B. C. The next important date is the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander in 332 B. C. This brought the Jews under new masters, the Greeks. The Greek period of Jewish history is not recorded in the books of the Bible which we commonly read, but in other books sometimes bound up with the Bible, but more often not, called the Apocrypha. The books of Maccabees in the Apocrypha tell how the Greeks oppressed the Jews. They add to the list of the foreign kings who ruled the Jews—Sargon the Assyrian, Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, and Cyrus the Persian—the name of Antiochus the Greek. In the days of this king, whose reign was ended only a little more than a hundred and fifty years before Christ, the book of Daniel was written.

The sufferings of the Jews under Antiochus the Greek were largely due to his determination to turn them all into Greeks. His plan was to change both their customs and their religion. He captured Jerusalem by attacking the city on a Sabbath day when the men would not fight. He placed a Greek altar—

which the Jews called "the abomination of desolation"—on the altar of sacrifice. He burned the sacred books, wherever he could find them; he broke down the carved work of the temple with axes and hammers, and he tried to compel all the Jews to give up their worship of the Lord, under pain of death. Against him rose up the Maccabees and succeeded at last in setting the people free. But they were only beginning their heroic struggle when the author of Daniel was writing his book. The storm was raging about them, and their hearts were failing them for fear. This book was written to console and encourage these grievously afflicted people.

The purpose of these stories of heroism and faith in the book is to assure the people that God will help them as he helped Daniel. As he saved Daniel from Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, from flames and lions, so will he save the Jews from the power of Antiochus.

This assurance is repeated in a series of visions. It was a time when it was not safe to speak plainly, and call Antiochus by name. The writer spoke, accordingly, in symbols, which wise men would understand.

Thus the hearts of the afflicted people were encouraged, their expectation was directed to the coming of the great prince, the Messiah, who should deliver them out of the hands of their oppressors, and make them again a great and happy people. They were in this expectation a hundred and fifty years after the book of Daniel, when Christ came at last.—Condensed from A Child's Guide to the Bible, by Dean Hodges.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of our lesson is in the royal palace of Babylon, when this city on the banks of the Euphrates was at the height of its glory under Nebuchadnezzar.

As the Ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace Look To-day

Is it not wonderful that the very palace of Nebuchadnezzar has been unearthed, and men living in the twentieth century after Christ can walk over the pavement on which Nebuchadnezzar walked seven centuries before Christ? Alluvial soil thrown upon the site of Babylon by the floods from the river covered it in places to a depth of fifty feet, until archæologists carefully dug through to the foundations of the ancient city.

Little except the brick foundations of Nebuchadnezzar's palace remains, but each brick is stamped with his name and title in cuneiform script. The palace

had several hundred chambers, most of them small. The largest one has at one side a low platform of brick, and this is believed to have been the throne-hall. In the débris many inscriptions were found, among them this statement, "I thought to build unto heaven."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

This is the first of three lessons from the Book of Daniel. Read thoughtfully the first six chapters of the book at one sitting, to feel again the fascinating power of the narratives, to catch their heroic note, and to gain the lesson which each has for today. Children listen to these tales with wide-eyed wonder, but when they have become youths and maidens, who have put away childish things, or mature men and women, do they know what are their great lessons? Let us teach them in the spirit in which they were written.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
GOD'S WORLD-KINGDOM: ITS NATURE AND PROGRESS

Beginning the Lesson. The history of Israel is in the position of a river which runs for a time underground before it returns to view. There is no Bible narrative of the Exile. We know indirectly that the Captivity continued for some seventy years (from the earlier Captivity) without break; also, that in the interval the Babylonian conquerors were themselves conquered, and their dominions passed into the hands of the Medes and Persians. But the several stories of the Exile cast their brilliant light upon successive points in the life of the Captivity. Nowhere is the charm of story greater than in the books of Daniel and Esther. Through these impressive narratives we are able to see how even in their exile the chosen people continued to witness for their God among the nations.—Professor Richard S. Moulton.

The Philosophy of History in the Book of Daniel. It is the first attempt, rude and simple, but most impressive, at a Philosophy of History—the first forerunner of Herder and Lessing and Hegel. However we date or interpret the details of the four empires, we see in them the first perception of the continuous succession of ages—the recognition of the truth that the nations of the earth are not merely to be regarded in relation to the Jewish people, as by the older prophets, but to be watched for their own sakes—the appreciation of the instructive fact that the story of humanity is that of a regular development of epochs, one growing out of another, cause leading to effect, race following race, and empire following empire, on a majestic plan, in which the Divine Economy is as deeply concerned as in the fate of the Chosen People.—Dean Stanley, in The History of the Jewish Church.

The Nature of God's World-Kingdom. The religion of the Old Testament is preëminently a religion of the forward look, of hope, of faith. The prophets who were the most competent interpreters of that religion, were inspired in all their teaching and activity by a sublime optimism. However dark and discouraging the present might be, the prophets were firmly convinced that ultimately God and his cause would triumph. This prophetic hope concerning the future was gathered up in the confident assertion that the kingdom of God would be established upon earth. In other words, the prophets were anticipating a state of society in which complete harmony would exist between God and man, so that the Divine purpose for man could come to a glorious realization. (The only reason why this fundamental hope was expressed in terms of *the kingdom* was that in the days of the prophets the best known form of national government was the monarchy. If in this democratic age any one should prefer the expression "democracy" or "republic" or "commonwealth" of God he may feel perfectly free to substitute one of these for the term "kingdom.")—Professor Frederick Carl Eiselen.

God's World-Kingdom is Sure. By the mystery of Christ's incarnation, by the power of weakness in the preacher of the Cross, by the energies of the transforming Spirit, the God of heaven has set up the Kingdom. It will never be destroyed. Its Divine origin guarantees its perpetual duration. The kingdoms of man's founding, whether they be in the realm of thought or of outward dominion, "have their day and cease to be," but the kingdom of Christ lasts as long as the eternal life of its King.

Its destructive power is graphically represented. The stone, apparently self-moved, dashes against the mass of iron and clay on which the colossus insecurely stands, and down it comes with a crash, breaking into a thousand fragments as it falls. Christ and his kingdom have reshaped the world. Christ and his gospel shattered the Roman empire and cast Europe into another mold. They have destructive work to do yet. The things that can be shaken will be shaken till they fall, and human society will never obtain its stable form till it is molded throughout after the pattern of the kingdom of Christ.

The vision of our passage has no reference to the quickening power of the kingdom; but the best way in which it destroys is by transformation. That highest glory of the work of Christ is but partially represented here, but there is a hint in the thirty-fifth verse which tells that the stone has a strange vitality, and can grow, and does grow, till it becomes an earth-filling mountain.

That issue is not reached yet; but "the dream is certain." The kingdom is concentrated in its King, and the life of Jesus, diffused through his servants, works to the increase of the empire, and will not cease till the kingdoms of the world are the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.—Condensed from Expositions of Scripture, by Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Is the World Growing Better? If the world is all a hopeless swamp and brier-patch, doomed to become more and more choked with thorns and poisonous plants, there is little ground of inspiration in our work; but if it is a growing wheatfield from which the weeds are being exterminated, we can thank God and take courage.

One reason why evil seems to be a greater factor in the world than it really is, is that evil advertises itself more loudly and gets more publicity than good. Evil is the exception and not the rule, and attracts more attention simply because it is the unusual and not the general fact. Let one man beat his wife and the whole neighborhood will quickly resound with the sensational tale, while no notice will be taken of the hundred exemplary husbands who treat their wives with the most praiseworthy propriety. A spot on the sun will attract thousands of observers, while its steady shining occasions no remark. Evil makes more noise in the world than good, it gets the front page and the biggest headlines in the newspaper, and this may mislead us to overestimate its prevalence and power.

We must bring this question of whether the world is growing better to the test of fact. Let us look at the world and see which way it is moving. To do this we must take a long view of history. We cannot see the hour hand of a clock move in a single second, but if we watch it long enough we shall see it move through a wide arc and finally sweep a full circle. The clock of history marks off centuries as its seconds, and we need to watch it for millenniums to see how it is moving. Most pessimistic pictures of the world are descriptive and not comparative: they show us how dark the world is today, but not how much darker it was yesterday and how much brighter it will be tomorrow; they disclose to us the world enveloped in gloom, but do not tell us whether the dusk is the deepening twilight of the evening or the brightening twilight of the morning. Of course, history is not all constant progress and at points we find retrogression and discouragement. There are eddies in the stream, though its main current flows forward. Humanity does not march with steady onward steps; at times it halts, breaks and falls back; but we should measure its movement not by its slips and falls but by its forward strides.

Progress has been as marked in the moral and social world as in the material world. Great ethical ideas are now built into our civilization that were as unknown in ancient times as the American continent. One of these is the principle of human freedom. Ancient empires were black with slaves, and a slave then had no rights that the master was bound to respect. The brotherhood of man is another principle that is wrought into the foundations of our modern world.

Legislation now regulates industry, sanitary conditions and dangerous machinery, child labor and the labor of women, limits the number of hours of work, controls public utilities, restricts combinations and trusts, lays increasing income taxes and in many ways seeks to promote just conditions in society. A social consciousness is being developed that is concerned with the common good and is working out the community welfare. It expresses itself in our princely foundations for education and philanthropy and in our increased humanity towards criminals and incapables.

Religious life is the supreme and final measure of progress, and by this test our proposition that the world is growing better must stand or fall. The general religious outlook of the world is discouraging enough and could be painted in very dark colors. With Christendom only partially Christianized, after nineteen centuries of Christian propaganda, the pessimist can put up a strong case from the religious point of view. Yet the fact that one-third of the world and that immensely the most important third is predominantly Christian is a tremendous achievement; and as Christianity is steadily gaining on the population of the world its future is not dark. It has grown more in the last hundred years than in the preceding eighteen hundred. What a striking commentary on the bold prediction of Voltaire, uttered in 1760, "Ere the beginning of the nineteenth century Christianity will have disappeared from the earth."

All progress in truth and good is religious, so that all the advancement that has already been noted falls within the Kingdom of God in the world. But there are points in progress that are distinctively religious. One gain of immense significance which has been won within as well as without the church is the right of private judgment. Only a few generations ago our fathers were burning heretics. Now we all have the priceless liberty of thought and speech in religion.

Next, the Bible and the whole subject of religion are being better understood. So voluminous and complex a book as the Bible is not to be mastered in a generation or in a century, and modern scholarship has greatly illuminated it and deduced its true teaching and spirit. Religion has become less ritualistic and mechanical and more spiritual and vital. The central thought of Christianity now is Christ himself. His Kingdom is being understood as the rule of his Spirit in the hearts and lives of men, a Christianized brotherhood. The chief line of progress in the church and Christianity of our day is that it has shifted its chief emphasis from *doctrine* to *service*. Doctrine has not been discarded nor even depreciated, for it is still and ever will be the necessary root of all duties and deeds. Yet doctrine is no longer simply proved as an abstract theological proposition, but is planted as a living root to sprout and blossom and bear fruit. The church is no longer so self-conscious but is growing socially minded. It is not now so exclusively set on saving itself, its own orthodoxy and members and children, but is more intent on saving the world. Formerly it was too individualistic, now it is increasingly altruistic.

The church is making good in all fields. In organization and leadership, gifts and service and sacrifice, courage and martyrdom, and in Christian lands and transformed pagan people, it has written and is writing the bravest and brightest pages of history.

In this great day we should be glad that we are alive and have a part in the grand work of rebuilding the world into the city of God. Let us clear a little space in the cluttered confusion right around us, and this brighter spot will make the whole world look better. Let us forget ourselves and become absorbed in doing our part in scattering the darkness of the world, and then we shall easily believe that "it is daybreak everywhere."—Condensed from an article in New Era Magazine, by James H. Snowden.

It Evens Up. An article in the editorial column of the New York Evening Mail says that a dozen men were discussing in the Pullman car smoking compartment the downfall of a minister, when suddenly a quiet man in the corner put his finger on a news item and called out: "Hear this. It is in the same daily news as the account of the minister's downfall. A hardy bishop of Alaska (Bishop Rowe) reports that he has covered thousands of miles on snowshoes, with only an Indian guide. Mercury seventy degrees below zero often—generally fifty degrees below. This clergyman is physician to the sick Indians; he is dentist, he is adviser; he marries them, and buries their dead. He begins and ends all with the teachings of the Christian religion. Often he walks hundreds of miles on one trip. Often on his sledges he takes provisions to the starving solitary miner's hut."

"That's the kind that evens up!" broke in one young man. Every man echoed the statement. In a moment the whole sentiment, that was slumping in social ruin, was changed. Men smiled as if in real relief. Perhaps the bishop will be comforted to know that his heroic story, on the same page of the day's history with noisome treason to all virtue, is like the "salt of the earth." It cures putrescence.

This is God's World. "I hold not with the pessimist that all things are ill, nor with the optimist that all things are well," writes Robert Browning; "all things are not ill and all things are not well, but all things must be well, because this is God's world."

What You Can Do for the Progress of God's World Kingdom. Do you ask what you can do for the Kingdom of God in your country, in your city, in your village?—you can at least give to it one life that is utterly true and faithful, one life loyal to the core to the will and work of God. It is not enough to contribute your criticism, you must contribute yourselves, yield yourselves to God, become his fellow-workers, be willing to suffer that others may succeed, to die that others may live. This is what it means to be a Christian! Not having comfort and peace and blissful expectations for ourselves, but so having the spirit of service and sacrifice that we cannot help entering into the Son's work which also is his Father's, and cannot help giving ourselves to the things which were all in all to Jesus Christ and for which he laid down his life.—John Hunter.

For Discussion. 1. It is the thought of an eternal God that really gives consistency to the fragmentary lives of men, the fragmentary history of the world.—Phillips Brooks.

2. History scarcely records such a fall as William Hohenzollern from the pinnacle of human power since the day when King Nebuchadnezzar walked in the palace of the Kingdom of Babylon and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, for the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" and while the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, 'The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will!' "—The Christian Advocate.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What impression of Daniel do you get from chapters 2-5? 2. What rare courage did he show in 4.27? 3. Who was Cyrus? 4. What does history tell us about the fall of Babylon? 5. What was the affliction that Nebuchadnezzar suffered? 6. What was there puzzling about the writing on the wall? 7. Of what sins was Belshazzar guilty that last night? 8. Has prohibition proved a success in our country? 9. Has it been well enforced? 10. What effect has it had in diminishing crime? 11. Poverty?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW DANIEL MET A SEVERE TEST

Beginning the Lesson. "We are lost!" exclaimed the captain of a ship upon which Hudson Taylor was sailing to China. "We have done everything that is humanly possible; but there is no wind and the tide is carrying us upon the coral reefs. Do you see how the cannibals are already assembling and waiting for their prey?"

"No, Captain, everything has not been tried," returned the great missionary. "There are four of us Christians upon the ship. Let us go by ourselves and beseech God earnestly for help." "Yes, yes," said the Captain.

The four Christians prayed that the lives of all might be spared. Soon Hudson Taylor became assured of help and went on deck and said, "Hoist the sails, for we shall have a breeze." "What!" exclaimed the officer. Then the missionary pointed to a flag on the top of the mast which at that moment began to move a trifle; soon the wind became stronger, sails were hoisted, the ship sailed close to the rocks but safely by, and disappeared from the eyes of the waiting cannibals. God had further work for Hudson Taylor.

God had further work for Daniel in Babylon. Early in his exile there his life was in very grave danger. What severe test did Nebuchadnezzar put to his wise men? Why did they fail? Daniel was reported wise, and Nebuchadnezzar had decreed that all the wise men and magicians of all sorts should be put to death. Why? When the officers sought Daniel did he not have great reason to fear? What did he ask? When it was granted, what did four Hebrew youths do? What was their petition? How was it granted? How did Daniel express his gratitude at being able to meet the king's test? What did he say was the dream? What did it mean? What was Daniel's reward?

Meeting a Hard Test Today. It was night in the heart of the Sudan. The stars cast their thin streams of light serenely down upon a circle of men who were gathered on the outskirts of Khartum. In the center of the circle stood a tall, young missionary, athletic of build and powerful of voice. For six weeks or more he had been patiently instructing the natives seated round him in the first principles of the Christian faith. They were men who were drawn from about twenty inland tribes. In that part of central Africa which Gordon and Kitchener made famous there are many millions of natives who have scarcely heard the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. With infinite labor, these men who formed the circle had been brought together and induced to undergo a little training before returning to their people.

The task of commending Christ to their respective tribes was not light but, on the contrary, was fraught with the utmost peril. Occasionally cannibalism was still a characteristic of these dwellers in the heart of Africa. The young missionary knew that it would require enormous courage for the natives who accepted Christ to play their part.

The last night had come; tomorrow the little band would break up and each man would return to his own people. Very solemnly, as they sat in the stillness of the night, their missionary spoke to them of the work that Christ required of them. He pictured all their difficulties and dangers—the possibility of a cruel death. Then quite plainly he put the issue before them: "Now, which of you will promise to try and make Jesus king of your tribe—king over its heart and over all its life?"

He waited in the darkness for a reply. At first there was nothing but silence. He knew that for many of them the promise alone might mean death. Suddenly one of them spoke in a strong, clear voice. *"Ina so,"* he said. (I will.) Then another and another spoke, *"Ina so," "Ina so"* (I will, I will), until every man in the circle had pledged himself to make Christ king even at the cost of his own life!

Is Christ yet king in New York and in London, in America and in England? Why should these men who had heard of Christ for only six weeks exhibit greater devotion to him than those men who have known him all their lives? Who will say of this task of kingmaking, "I will"?—The Youth's Companion.

Religion still Is not a Cushioned Chair, but a Voyage of Adventure. As a boy of ten I went to the seaside with thirty or forty adults from my own church at Halifax. They all went for a sail. It was a lovely day. Scarcely a ripple moved the sunny waters. The party had hardly been on the sea ten minutes before the adults began singing, and I have remembered the refrain all my life:

We are out on the ocean sailing
To our home beyond the tides.

I remember that at the time I thought that was a rather soft conception of a voyage. All I was doing, all the rest were doing, was laving the water with our hands as we were carried gently along. We had no errand. We were doing no business. We were being borne along in sunny indolence. And that was just the conception of the Christian life outlined in that particular song.

I have found that the voyage of life is not a picnic but a crusade. The Christian life should not find its symbolism in the sunny picnic in a pleasure boat, but rather in Shackleton's glorious struggle in the teeth of blizzard and hurricane, hacking a hazardous way through miles of Antarctic seas.—Dr. Jowett.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God.—James.

Prayer is the secret passage to the light.—David J. Burrell.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. II. Daniel Interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What kind of courage did Daniel show in chapter 1? 2. Chapter 2? 3. Chapter 4? 4. Here in chapter 5? 5. Did Belshazzar know better than to lead the life he did? 6. What did Daniel tell him as to this? 7. "That word *tekel* is a good word to remember," said a small boy: what did he mean? 8. What do Eccl. 11.9 and 12.14 say about the judgment? 9. How much do you weigh in pounds and ounces? 10. Your teachers, friends, acquaintances are weighing you each day in another fashion: how?

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Golden Text

God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 12.14

LESSON Daniel 5.1-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 35

REFERENCE MATERIAL Genesis 19.1-28; Exodus 14.21-31; Ezekiel 31.1-14; Acts 12.20-23

DANIEL 5.17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty: 19 and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will. 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this, 23 but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing was inscribed.

25 And this is the writing, that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. 27 TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28 PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST, verses 1-4.

II. THE WRITING ON THE WALL AND THE FAILURE OF THE WISE MEN TO INTERPRET IT, verses 5-9.

III. DANIEL SENT FOR, ON THE QUEEN'S ADVICE, AND BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING, verses 13-16.

IV. DANIEL TELLS THE KING HE HAS BEEN FOREWARNED, verses 17-24. *Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another,* said Daniel to Belshazzar the king, who had promised him a purple robe, a chain of gold, and the position of third ruler in the kingdom, if he would interpret the handwriting that had appeared on the wall; *nevertheless I will read the writing and make known the interpretation,* he assured him. And then he reminded Belshazzar how Nebuchadnezzar through God's favor had become so great that *all the peoples, nations and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would he slew* (see Dan. 2.12,13; 3.6; 11.3,16,36) *and whom he would he kept alive;* and as he wished he exalted or debased his people. But when he became proud (Dan. 4.30,31) and *his spirit was hardened* he was himself debased, for he *was deposed from his kingly throne* and dwelt *with the wild asses, and was fed with grass like oxen* until he recognized the supreme sovereignty of *the Most High God.* "His penalty was nothing absolutely abnormal. His

illness is well known to science as that form of hypochondriasis (madness) in which a man takes himself for a wolf, or a dog, or some other animal. Probably the fifth century monks, who were known as the 'Boskoi' from feeding on grass, may have been, in many cases, half maniacs who in time took themselves for oxen" (Farrar). Though thou knewest how great Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, *thou hast not humbled thy heart,* solemnly said Daniel, and then charged him with having drunk wine, he and his court, out of the sacred vessels purloined from the temple at Jerusalem. And then Daniel charged the king with having praised the senseless images called gods, and having neglected the true God *in whose hand thy breath is,* who created thee. *Then,* concluded Daniel, *the part of the hand was sent from before him,* the fingers of a man's hand, verse 5, *and this writing was inscribed.* Whether the fingers appeared miraculously, or Belshazzar saw them in a vision, is not stated.

"The moving finger writes; and having writ
Moves on: nor all thy piety, nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out one word of it" (Omar Khayyam).

"The feast clearly took place in the palace; and it is evident that when the king saw the vision he was under the influence of wine. Either of two things may have helped to cause the vision. One is, that the words, *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,* may have been there, before the king's eyes, permanently inscribed on the wall, in cuneiform characters. The standards of weights and measures were probably kept at the palace, and there would be fixed spots in the palace halls for testing them, or possibly for weighing the royal revenues, which may have been paid in kind as well as in coin. Near the spots where this was done the words recorded may have been inscribed; *Mene* marking the place where the goods were *counted; Tekel,* that where they were *weighed;* and *Upharsin,* that where they were classified as to quality, and *separated.* (I am told that such a thing is to be seen in the cathedral at Freiburg, in the Black Forest, where a loaf of bread on the wall marks the spot where the town bread is weighed.) The other supposition is that the inscriptions may not have been in the Banquet Hall, but in some other part of the palace, where the king had often seen them, and that they came up vividly to his mind. Or a serving-man may have opened a door, through which they became visible from the royal seat. The vision of the hand was due to Belshazzar's guilty conscience, as he knew that he was committing sacrilege in drinking out of the holy vessels from Jerusalem" (Margaret D. Gibson, in Expository Times).

V. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WRITING, verses 25-28. *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin,* that is, numbered, numbered, weighed and divisions, as the words are given literally in the margin of the Bible. The words are Aramaic, and in the Hebrew Bible the whole story is told in Aramaic, not Hebrew. "The three words are really the names of three weights: a mina, a shekel, and half-shekels. The puzzle consisted partly in the character or manner in which they were supposed to have been written—an unfamiliar form of the Aramaic character, for instance, or, as the mediæval Jews suggested, a vertical instead of a horizontal arrangement of the letters; partly in the difficulty of attaching any meaning to them even when they were read; what could the names of three weights signify? Here Daniel's skill in 'declaring riddles' (verse 12) comes in. *Mene* means *numbered* as well as *a mina;* Tekel suggests *tekil, weighed"* (Driver). "The *U* in *Upharsin* stands for *and,* and *P(h)arsin* is the plural of *peres"* (Dummeton). *"Parsin* or *peres,* a half-shekel, points allusively to a double interpretation: Thy Kingdom is *divided, peris,* and *given to the Medes and Persians,* Aramaic *paras"* (Driver). Professor Moulton's supposition is that they were in three columns and were read downward, upwards and then downwards, thus:

M U P
E L H
N E A
E K R
M E S
E T I
N E N

VI. DANIEL IS PROMOTED: BELSHAZZAR IS SLAIN, verses 29-30. That Belshazzar fulfilled his promise (verse 16) in the face of immediate danger to his realm, is remarkable. "Let us remember that if this royal pagan could not keep his kingdom, he kept his word" (Phelps). That night *Belshazzar was slain,* and *Darius the Mede received the kingdom.*

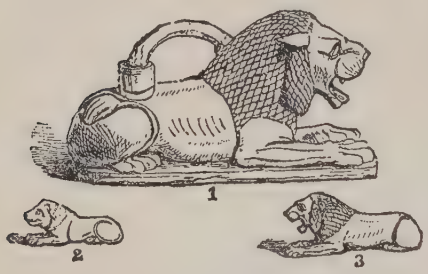
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Thou art weighed in the balances, verse 27. On the walls of the famous Rock Tomb of Thebes there is a representation of the Hall of Judgment. Osiris, the presiding deity, holds in one hand a shepherd's crook and in the other a scourge,

Ancient Egyptian Death Judgment. (From a drawing on one of the sepulchral papyrus rolls)

while on the scales of justice before him lies the heart of a human being.

In the ancient Egyptian book of Ami, there is a rough illustration of the god of the scales. Into one side of the balance is put the man's heart, with all the good works he has done in his life; while into the other side is put a Roll of the Law: the scales are to tell whether or not the man has fulfilled the requirements of the moral code.



1. Fifteen Minas. 2. Three Shekels. 3. One Mina.

"It is highly probable," says Layard, in Babylon and Assyria, "that the curious series of bronze lions discovered at Nimrod during my first researches were used for weights. Since the coating of green rust has been removed from them, they are found in several instances to have two short inscriptions, one in cuneiform characters with the name of Sennacherib, the other in Phœnician letters."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing upon the Lesson. What cases of judgment upon kings for having their "hearts lifted up" in a pride that forgot God, have we seen this year?

The Chaldean Dynasty in Babylon. The Chaldean dynasty was short-lived, only eighty-eight years in all. Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 B. C., and left his great, well-organized empire to his weak son Evil-Merodach. (From 2 K. 25.27-30 we learn that this king freed Jehoiachin after an imprisonment of thirty-seven years, and gave him a place at the royal table.) After a reign of two years Evil-Merodach was murdered by one of his officers, Nergalsharuzur, or Nergalsharezer as he is called in Jer. 39.3, who commanded Nebuchadnezzar's army at the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. Though he prayed to his god Marduk for a long life and a stable throne, he lived only four years. Nine months after his young son Labashi-Marduk became king, some of the nobles formed a conspiracy, murdered the king, and placed Nabonidus, one of their own number, on the throne. Nabonidus strengthened the wall of Babylon along the Euphrates, for danger threatened from the north, but his great interest centered in restoring and adorning the temples of the gods. Because he did more for the old Babylonian and Assyrian gods than for the favorite gods of the people—Marduk, Bel, and Nebo—his people grew to hate him, especially after he left his capital for Tema, and the great religious feasts could no longer be observed without the presence of the king.

Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. His son was the Belshazzar of our lesson. Because no secular historian names Belshazzar, it was argued that he

never existed. But in the ruins of a temple at Mugheir (Ur) an inscription giving an account of the restoration of the temple of Sin, the Moongod, by Nabonidus (called Nabonahid) has been discovered which contains these words: "As for me, Nabonidus, King of Babylon, from sin against thy great divinity save me, and a life of remote days give as a gift; and as for Belshazzar, the eldest son, the offspring of my heart, the fear of thy great divinity cause thou to exist in his heart, and let not sin possess him—let him be satisfied with fulness of life." Belshazzar was the heir to the throne of Babylon, but the monuments do not indicate that he ever reigned. The Book of Daniel calls him King of Babylon; he seems to have been the commander of the army, and he may have governed Babylon as viceroy and have been popularly known as king, or he may have actually shared the throne with his father Nabonidus.

The Rise of Cyrus the Great. Meanwhile Cyrus was acquiring his title of the Great. In 559 B. C. he was king of Anshan, the native name of the little state among the mountains northeast of Babylon, which the Assyrians and Hebrews called Elam. In 549 B. C. he made himself master of Media; by 546 B. C. he had acquired the title of king of Persia. Next he extended his empire westward to the Ægean Sea. In 538 B. C. he captured Nabonidus and Babylon, and adopted the title of "King of Babylon and King of Countries." He was in truth master of all the world then worth having, with the exception of Egypt.

When Cyrus in his triumphant progress marched toward Babylon, Nabonidus met him on the northern border of Babylonia and his army was defeated. The Persian army under the generalship of Gobryas captured the north Babylonian town of Sippar, and next entered the outer part of Babylon without a battle, and captured Nabonidus, who had retreated to the city. The history is not clear, but probably Belshazzar was in command of the inner city, and feeling secure behind its huge walls, was feasting one night two weeks later, when Cyrus himself made his triumphant entry. "That night Belshazzar was slain."

That Babylon fell so quickly is one of the unexplained wonders of history, though the accounts agree in saying that the course of the Euphrates was diverted so that the attacking army crossed over the river-bed.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Are you skilfully creating opportunities for the use of all the technical points you have taught, such as knowledge of the books of the Bible, use of concordance, etc.?

Does each pupil leave your class with a definite knowledge of some one fact or principle gained or illuminated by the lesson? Does he feel that on some one phase of human experience he has felt an emotion likely to influence his future conduct?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
ENFORCING THE JUDGMENT AGAINST STRONG DRINK

Beginning the Lesson.

If only myself could talk to myself
As I knew him a year ago,
I could tell him a lot
That would save him a lot,
Of things he ought to know.

So muses Kipling, and he voices the thought of us all. We profit by our own experiences, but too late to "save us a lot." Coleridge says somewhere that experience is like the stern-lights of a ship: it illumines only the path over which we have already traveled. But other ships have gone over the same path ahead of us, and their stern-lights have shown us the dangerous reefs in time for us to avoid them. What do I mean by this figure of speech? That the experiences of others could and should warn us of dangers in our own pathway before we traverse it.

Belshazzar had known how Nebuchadnezzar's proud heart had been humbled and his rebellious spirit punished: how was it? But Belshazzar failed to profit by the experience of Nebuchadnezzar; he had not taken the lesson to himself. This is the thought that Daniel emphasized in the words: "Thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this!" Of what sins did he then accuse Belshazzar?

The Charge against Belshazzar of Drunkenness. When the Allies entered Paris after the battle of Waterloo the rattle of artillery over the pavement prevented a large audience in one of the theaters from hearing the play: they had the doors closed and then gave no further thought to what those ominous sounds meant. So to Belshazzar came the report of the approach of the enemy from the north, and soon the noise of their arrival could be heard at the very walls of the city, but he shut himself up within his palace and gave himself up to the enjoyment of a great feast, with its accompaniments of "wine, women and song."

Belshazzar is often referred to as having met his death while drunk with wine. This is doubtless a correct inference, although the Book of Daniel does not expressly say this. The first verse of our chapter reads: Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. And the last verse reads: In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. It was a feast of folly, and such Babylonian feasts usually ended with revelry and drunkenness.

The Temptation to Make Life a Feast. There are seasons when we would all like to waltz merrily through life and drain its sparkling wine cups to the very dregs. In certain moods we would like to have a good time of it—do just what we like, chase every butterfly, sip every flower-cup and pamper every whim. So strong is this drift that men will pursue pleasure regardless of solemn threats and impending disasters. On this particular night the forces of the Medes and the Persians surrounded Babylon, and even in the midst of the revelry the deadly thud of their battering rams was heard, but Belshazzar cried, "Up with the cups and on with the dance." This is a most solemn illustration of the mesmeric might of pleasure over a man's soul. But we see the same things today. Men will get drunk, women will play bridge, young people will have their fill of pleasure, while their dearest of kin are trembling on the verge of eternity. When pleasure gets hold of a person it makes him regardless of every sacred feeling and of every overhanging danger.

Belshazzar feasted on, but into his revels there came this awful finger engraving the dread words silently on the walls. The drinking was high, but this could not be forgotten. The dance swung along, but this could not be ignored. The king had an army of a myriad men, but all their prowess could not blot out the writing on the wall. Quietly, inexorably, silently, indelibly, the three dread words were engraved on the palace wall. We too might fling ourselves into the mad race for gold and enjoyment, but in our quiet and more thoughtful moments the Divine finger inevitably comes and inscribes upon the walls of our conscience the awful words, "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." We are solemnly warned that this life must come to an end, and after that the judgment. "Rejoice, young man, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." To live for self is to lose the kingdom of our manhood. It is to be uncrowned. It is to be defeated and destroyed.—Thomas Phillips.

The Human Instinct of Judgment. Judgment is a human instinct first; a religious dogma afterward. Men know, although the knowledge does not always rise to the surface of consciousness, that over against their lives there is being passed a Verdict on the part of him to whom their lives belong,—a Verdict which is not a mere Opinion, but a Sentence, and assignment to men of their true place in a universe created by a just God, and in which justice will ultimately reign. Dogmas of a final judgment are the necessary answer to this human instinct.

It would seem that sins against the body, and certain stages of these sins, have a peculiar power of awaking to vivid terror this human instinct of judgment. The insulted temple of God reverberates to the blasphemies of the polluting human passion, and gives back their echoes as voices of the Divine judgment. The records of the awakening of conscience in men who have soaked themselves in drink are full of this sudden horror. The conscience-sleep which the swallowing of alcohol is intended to secure is rudely broken as by an unseen hand, and in a terrible swift sobriety the unhappy man finds himself face to face with the issues of his sin. "One Tuesday evening," so runs the memorable story of the conversion of S. H. Hadley, the friend of the outcast, "I sat in a saloon in Harlem, a homeless, friendless, dying drunkard. As I sat there thinking, I seemed to feel some great and mighty Presence. I did not then know what it was. I walked up to the bar, and said I would never take an-

other drink if I died on the street." And it is in strictest accord with the experience of many men in a plight that the message of judgment written in letters of fire across the heated brain is seen as an objective reality upon the wall of the room or on the sky. Kipling has described this vision of a remorseful soul in a sentence which has become a classic:

When the drunken comrade mutters
And the great guard lantern gutters
And the horror of our fall is written plain,
Every secret self-revealing on the aching white-washed ceiling,
Do you wonder that we drug ourselves from pain?

Now it is this experience which is recorded of Belshazzar for our warning.—G. G. Johnston Ross, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

The Far-Off Reckoning. "My son, if you do not break yourself of this careless habit, you will suffer for it many times."

"When?" the little boy asked.

"When you are grown up and are in business."

"Oh!" The child is not interested.

The future is far away to the child. When there is a promised pleasure the days creep, and threatened punishment seems always a long way off.

In the physical as in the moral life, penalties are too far removed to influence the child. When your daughter prefers sitting over romances to taking proper exercise, you may use what you regard as a powerful argument. You may say, "My child, if you do not get plenty of fresh air and exercise now, and eat proper food, you will have an ugly complexion, a bad figure, and poor health when you grow up." That time is too far away. She would rather omit the long walk today, cuddle over the fire with a box of candy, and trust to luck to avert the vague evils of the future.

We teach all our school children the evils of tobacco, yet many high-school boys strut proudly about with cigarettes drooping from their mouths. In one neighborhood where there was much smoking among boys a troop of Boy Scouts was organized. The scoutmaster stated that no boy who smoked need apply for membership. When the company was ready to go on its first camping expedition all the boys in the school had left off smoking. They did not care to be barred from that opportunity.

It is always wise to deal instantly and in a decisive manner with faults that denote serious flaws in character.—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

Enforcing the Judgment Against Strong Drink. There are two ways of dealing with any disease. You may treat the symptoms, or the cause. Our early temperance workers dealt with symptoms: modern temperance workers are dealing with the cause.

But the passing of a law, even of a Constitutional Amendment, does not settle a question of conduct. It merely makes it possible for those who have the enforcing of the law to compel right conduct. If no effort is made to enforce the prohibition law, or if the effort is but half-heartedly made, that law on our statute books will not prevent drunkenness.

A majority voted for the law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of strong drink. But the enemies of that law are still aggressively active, and the majority may become the minority unless by an unceasing process of enlightened education the mass of the people are kept firm in their conviction that strong drink is a curse. "There is much fighting yet to be done at the centers, and for a long time there will be guerilla warfare among the hills." The law will not be enforced unless back of it there is a strong sentiment of the people. Nor will it be enforced unless the right officials are appointed to have charge of the task.

How well is the law enforced today? What gain has been made during the last year?

For Discussion. 1. Privilege and power perish. We recall that canvas from the brush of G. F. Watts, "Sic Transit." There is a still, shrouded form lying on the bier, while strewing the floor are emblems of pleasure, sport, culture, and war. The shield and lance of the soldier, the book of the scholar, the wine-cup and the lute, are without use now. And the rough inscription behind is like this writing on the wall:

What I spent, I had,
What I saved, I lost,
What I gave, I have.

"Thus passes the glory of the world." It was true of Belshazzar. His brilliant sway was but brief. And those who have lived simply for themselves, excluding God, are even as he was, deluded men.—J. W. G. Ward.

2. The inevitable weighing of character. We, too, shall be weighed in the balances and found—what? If we put our lives into God's hands now we need have no fear of passing into his hands then. We have our temptations, but they are not greater than those of Belshazzar. We have our endowment and our opportunities, and they may be even greater than his because of the age in which we live. But this is certain: we have what Belshazzar had not—the example and teaching of Jesus Christ, and the grace that never fails those who avail themselves of help Divine.—J. W. G. Ward.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire chapter. 2. How had Daniel aroused the enmity of influential men of the realm? 3. What was the expressed motive for the request of the satraps? 4. What was the real motive? 5. Why did Daniel have his windows open toward Jerusalem? 6. What other course might Daniel have taken in this matter? 7. Would it have been right? 8. How often should Christians pray daily? 9. Is the bodily attitude in prayer important? Why, or why not? 10. What has the privilege of prayer meant to you? 11. Should Darius have kept his promise? 12. Under what circumstances is it justifiable, if ever, not to keep one's word? 13. What king in New Testament times kept a vow which he regretted and that caused the death of an innocent man? (Mt. 14.9). 14. What do we mean when we say, "It is a law of the Medes and Persians"? 15. What illustration of the law of the Medes and Persians is given in the Book of Esther? 16. What good traits do you see in Darius? 17. What evil traits? 18. Does God deliver from danger every one that trusts in him?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JUDGMENT AGAINST KING ALCOHOL

Beginning the Lesson. According to Confucius there was a certain water-vessel which hung obliquely when empty, vertically when half full, and turned over and spilled its contents when full to the brim. This water-vessel was hung on the right of the throne to warn its occupant against "fulness," or the pride which precedes a fall. Nebuchadnezzar had needed such a warning. "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by the might of my power?" he cried in all his pride, and then when his heart was lifted up, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and driven forth in his madness as a wild beast till he learned that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and that he setteth upon it whomsoever he will.

And Belshazzar's heart, like Nebuchadnezzar's, was lifted up with pride, and then retribution came to him: how?

Belshazzar's Warning and Fate. At a great feast in his palace at Babylon, to which a thousand lords and all the women of his harem had been summoned, Belshazzar the king had the wine served in the golden vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the temple in Jerusalem.

Such a use of sacred vessels was sacrilege. It was a bold defiance of the Most High God.

Suddenly a strange sight met the king's eyes as he gazed at the palace wall. Upon the plaster over against the candlestick the fingers of a man's hand wrote three words. The king's face paled, his limbs trembled, and in terror he sent for the professional "wise men" of Babylon, promising a purple robe and chain of gold and the position of third ruler in the kingdom to whoever would interpret that writing. All were unable to do this, and at the suggestion of the queen Daniel was sent for, for Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar's father, had found him a wise interpreter of dreams.

Daniel refused the king's gifts, but agreed to interpret the writing. Before doing this, he boldly told the king of his guilt. He reminded him how Nebuchadnezzar had been indebted to God for his glory and power; how his pride had brought him low, till he was driven off to live like the beast which in his insanity he thought himself to be, and then with returning sanity he had acknowledged that to God all power and glory belonged. Daniel told Belshazzar that though he had known all this, he had not humbled himself but had insulted Almighty God by drinking wine from vessels consecrated to him, and by wor-

shipping senseless idols of gold and stone. Therefore this writing had been inscribed to warn him of the punishment close at hand.

Then Daniel read and interpreted the writing on the wall. *Mene:* God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end. *Tekel:* thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Peres:* thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar commanded his officers to give the promised reward to Daniel. And that very night the king was slain.

"Crownless and sceptreless Belshazzar lay,
A robe of purple round a form of clay."

Drunken Germans Celebrating their "Victory" at the Marne. At the Marne on September 9, 1914, the Prussian Guard smashed through Foch's right. They were wild with joy. The French line was pierced. They at once began celebrating, at La Frère-Champenoise. When this was announced to Foch he telegraphed to headquarters: "My center gives way, my right recedes; the situation is excellent. I shall attack." For this, we must remember, is the man who says, "A battle won is a battle in which one is not able to believe one's self vanquished." He gave the order to attack. Everything that he cared about in this world was at stake. This desperate maneuver would save it all—or it would not.

Toward six o'clock on that evening the Germans, celebrating their certain victory, saw themselves confronted by a "new" French army pouring into the gap they had thought their road to Paris. The Forty-second Division had not only blocked the roundabout road to Paris, they had broken the morale of Von Buelow's crack troops.

At nine o'clock the next morning (September 10), the Forty-second entered La Frère-Champenoise where they found officers of the Prussian Guard lying, dead drunk, on the floors in the cantonments, surrounded by innumerable bottles of stolen champagne wherewith they had been celebrating their victory.—Clara Laughlin, in Foch the Man.

Thou Art Weighed in the Balance. Should you say that it is possible to weigh the soul of a fly or the mark made by a pencil on a sheet of paper? This is what Mr. J. F. Liedler, a California jeweler, can do. He calls the difference between the weight of a living fly and the same fly dead, its soul, though others say it is the weight of the gases that have escaped from the body of the dead fly. His remarkably sensitive scale works within a watch case, the dial of which is marked off into "degrees." The difference between the weight of the living and the dead fly is twenty-three degrees, one degree representing a weight of one four-million, nine hundred-thousandth of an ounce! A mark a quarter of an inch long made by a soft lead pencil weighs about twice as much as the "soul of the fly."

So, in the words of James Russell Lowell, life is constantly weighing us in sensitive scales, and telling every one of us precisely what our real weight is, to the last grain of dust.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Crime and punishment grow out of one stem.—Emerson.

God deals with souls as men deal with sovereigns, which they examine and weigh one by one.—T. T. Lynch.

Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.—Eccl. 11.9.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. III. Daniel Interpreting the Handwriting on the Wall.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire sixth chapter. 2. What new kingdom was in power in Babylon, and what was Daniel's position therein? (Dan. 6.1,2). 3. What did Daniel's enemies say of him in verses 4 and 5? 4. Why were they his enemies? 5. How did they flatter the king? 6. What was the "writing," verse 10? 7. What is an "interdict"? 8. Was Daniel's position at prayer (verse 10) an act of bravado? 9. Daniel's enemies were certain that he would offer his prayers to his God as usual: what if he had shut his windows and prayed in secret? 10. Will it make a difference if you fail to do what others have a right to expect of a Christian? 11. What two reasons for Daniel's deliverance does the story give?

DANIEL AND THE LIONS

Golden Text

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Hebrews 11.33

LESSON Daniel 6.1-28 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 8.31-39

REFERENCE MATERIAL Jeremiah 38; Daniel 3; Acts 12.1-19; 23.12-35; Hebrews 11.32-40

DANIEL 6.16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. *Now* the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried with a lamentable voice; the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was the king exceeding glad, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PROMOTION THE CAUSE OF ENMITY TO DANIEL, verses 1-3. *It pleased Darius* (see the Historical Background) to make Daniel one of the three presidents over his satraps, and *because an excellent spirit was in him* the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

II. THE INGENIOUS PLOT OF DANIEL'S ENEMIES, verses 4-15. The jealousy of the two other presidents and all the satraps led them to plot Daniel's death. His record was unassailable, only on the ground of his fidelity to his religion could he be attacked, was their conclusion. The scheme which they then concocted was so to play upon the king's vanity as to induce him to pass a law that for thirty days no one should ask a petition of any god or man save of the king only, as though he were a god to whom the whole nation must pay divine honors. Whoever should violate this decree should be cast to the lions. There was no allusion here to Daniel; the king was immensely flattered and all unsuspicious of the purpose behind the request fell into their trap. Dr. F. B. Meyer recalls the fact that Queen Victoria never allowed herself to write and dispatch a letter on the same day that troubling news reached her, but Darius evidently took no time for reflection. *He signed the writing and the interdict*, and the law of the Medes and Persians *altereth not*. The unalterableness of a decree of a Persian king is frequently referred to in the Book of Esther.

Daniel continued his habit of prayer just as he did before the decree was issued: note that he not only prayed but *gave thanks* in the face of the awful fate he knew was approaching. Three times a day he knelt in his chamber where his windows were *open toward Jerusalem*. The chamber was on the flat roof of his house, and the windows had lattice-work blinds such as are still common in the East, which could be opened and shut like doors. Jerusalem—and especially the temple—was to a devout Jew the most sacred spot on earth. Compare Solomon's words about captives praying toward the land, 1 K. 8.44,48, and Ps. 5.7; Jonah 2.4. "A score of open lattices might indicate nothing save

that the heat was lessening. But the lattice of Daniel, open toward Jerusalem, was the witness of a heroic heart. It was the index of a soul that in seductive Babylon was true to the God and the temple of its race. It revealed a spirit which honors could not destroy, a love which distance was powerless to quench, a heroism which no impending doom could shake" (G. H. Morrison).

Daniel's enemies were on the watch, and with malicious joy they sought the king. Craftily they led him to repeat the decree he had made. Compare their respectful words of address in verse 7, "King Darius, live for ever," when they wished to gain the decree from the king, with their abrupt words now, *Hast thou not signed,* etc., which apparently show contempt of the king whom they could so easily use for their own ends. And then they announced that *that Daniel* (how the contemptuous words betray their jealousy) had transgressed the new law. *Then the king was sore displeased.* So was Herod, when Herodias's daughter demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod had given his word, and he had the Baptist put to death; Darius had given his word, and he ordered the death of Daniel, although he *labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him.* But he was powerless before his own law, as the crafty men reminded him.

III. HOW THE PLOT FAILED, verses 16-23. As Daniel was consigned to the den of lions, the king said to him, *Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.* "What impression are we making upon observers—Dariuses who are looking at us?" questions Joseph Parker. "Do they expect us to be delivered, honored, crowned, because servants of God?" After sealing the mouth of the den with his seal the king passed the night fasting and sleepless, and in the morning hastened to the den *With a lamentable voice,* a voice quivering with grief, he cried to Daniel. Had his God indeed been able to deliver him? *My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths,* answered Daniel. "God always has an angel of help for those who are willing to do their duty" (Cuyler). "We need not be incredible about the actual deliverance of Daniel," thinks Dr. W. L. Watkinson, for "there are men whom bees will not sting, nor dogs bite, and who find the wild beasts of the forest tame." *Then was the king exceeding glad* and ordered Daniel's release. His deliverance from the lions is expressly declared to be *because he had trusted in his God.*

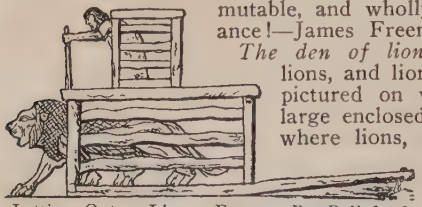
IV. DANIEL'S ENEMIES DESTROYED, AND HIS GOD HONORED, verses 24-27.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, verse 10. "Jews in foreign lands turn in prayer toward the land of Jerusalem; in the land of Jerusalem, toward Jerusalem; and in Jerusalem, toward the Temple," says the Talmud. Mohammed first ordered his disciples to face Jerusalem when they prayed, but after his quarrel with the Jews he had them face Mecca. In all Mohammedan mosques there is today a niche, or small alcove, called the *Mihrab,* which marks the *Kiblah,* the direction in which Mecca lies. When we visited Turkish mosques with a Mohammedan dragoman, we learned that to him the lofty domes, the spacious floors with their wonderful rugs, the corner pulpits, even the serpentine pillars in St. Sophia that came from the temple of Ephesus and the porphyry columns brought there from the temple of Baalbec, were of no consequence compared with the *Mihrabs* which he always pointed out with awe, and toward which he faced and offered a prayer when we were otherwise occupied.

The law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not, verse 12. The strict etiquette of the Persian court obliged the king never to revoke an order once given, however much he might regret it, because in so doing he would contradict himself, and, according to Persian notions, the law could not contradict itself. A curious instance of the unchangeable character of the Medo-Persian law is seen in the fact that, after Ahasuerus had issued the order directing the cruel slaughter of the Jews (Esther 3.13), he would not reverse it even at the urgent request of Esther, but he issued another edict in which he granted the Jews permission "to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life." Thus the first irreversible edict was completely neutralized

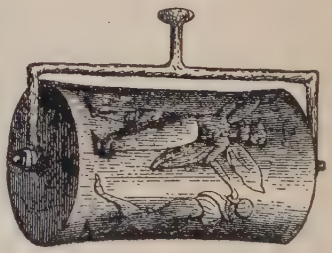
by another just as irreversible as itself; and the king continued to act his part as a character but little short of divinity: infallible, immutable, and wholly free from the weakness of repentance!—James Freeman, in Bible Manners and Customs.



Letting Out a Lion. From a Bas-Relief of Sardanapalus III

The den of lions, verse 10. Babylonia abounded in lions, and lion-hunting is the royal sport frequently pictured on walls and tablets. The Persians had large enclosed parks which they called "Paradises," where lions, tigers, boars, and other wild animals were kept for the royal chase. Sometimes a lion was brought into the field in a portable cage, and a slave standing on the top raised the gate to liberate it for the hunt, as our illustration shows.

And with the signet of his lords, verse 17. "Every Babylonian of any importance at all carried a seal, generally in the shape of a cylinder, which was used to stamp baked-clay documents of all kinds." One too poor to own a seal made an impression with his thumb on the damp clay. It is interesting to recall that the signet, or seal, of Darius Hystaspis represented the king as engaged in a lion hunt.



Seal Cylinder

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When Babylon was taken, of what empire did it become a part? Under what king?

Daniel's Positions in the Medo-Persian Empire. When a young man, after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2), Daniel was made "to rule over the whole province of Babylon, and to be chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon." On the death of that monarch he seems to have lost his high position, for Belshazzar, as a reward for interpreting the handwriting on the wall, exalted him, making him "the third ruler in the kingdom." Belshazzar was slain, but Darius the Mede made Daniel one of the three presidents who controlled the one hundred and twenty satraps, and found so "excellent a spirit in him" that he purposed placing him over the whole realm. He must now have been an old man.

Daniel's House. It was at one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, probably Babylon, that Daniel lived. His house was probably a large building where he "did the king's business," many of whose rooms were set apart for the various officials who were under his superintendence. His "chamber" was built upon one corner of the flat roof, or formed the upper part of a tower-like addition to the main building.

Darius and Cyrus. According to Dan. 1.21 Daniel remained at the court of Babylon from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to those of Cyrus; according to Dan. 5.31 Darius the Mede conquered Belshazzar the Chaldean king; and according to Dan. 6.28 the reign of Cyrus the Persian followed the reign of Darius. Darius is a perplexing problem, for he is not mentioned in secular history, and Cyrus was the conqueror of Babylon. But inscriptions have been found which show that Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, was associated with his father as ruler of Babylon and was killed by the army of Cyrus under Gobryas, and a tablet dated thirteen years after the fall of Babylon calls Gobryas "governor of Babylon." It has been conjectured that "Darius the Mede" was another name for Gobryas, who ruled as governor under Cyrus.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Our story of Daniel illustrates the duty of keeping up the prayer habit even when tempted to abandon it. A Sunday-school worker who has investigated the prayer habit of pupils young and old, in hundreds of schools, reports that scarcely five per cent kneel for a word of prayer in the morning. Do you

know what is the prayer habit of your pupils? If you do not, make use of the opportunity which this lesson affords to discover this.

Daniel had perfect trust in God. Perfect trust in God makes prayer a reality. And equally true is it that real prayer leads to perfect trust in God. "We do not pray because we believe in God; we believe in God because we pray," declares Dr. Lyman Abbott, and then he illustrates his seemingly strange statement thus: "A mother wishes her child to grow into an experience of prayer. So every night when plays and tasks and human fellowships have come to an end for the day, she kneels by her child's bed and together they pray. The child repeats 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' or 'Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,' and with it the wishes of his love for others. There is a moment of pure unselfishness, a moment of indefinable peace. The mother feels an invisible companionship which she makes no attempt to explain. The child catches the feeling from the mother and shares it without understanding it. He wishes to do what mother does, to share his mother's 'Quiet Hour.' He prays—he believes in the life because he possesses it."

"This last sentence—He believes in the life because he possesses it—suggests the truth that we need to realize and to apply in Sunday-school," comments Miss Frederica Beard. "Belief follows action; doing leads to faith. We wish our children to grow into an experience of prayer. Herein lies the value of an habitual time and form of prayer."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE TRIAL AND TRIUMPH OF FAITH

Beginning the Lesson. It is interesting to compare three stories of loyalty to God in the face of death: that of Daniel's three friends who were cast into the fiery furnace, chapter three of Daniel; of Daniel himself in our lesson of today; and of the soldiers of Antiochus Epiphanes, as told in Second Maccabees. This is the third story: "They set the battle in array against the Jews on the Sabbath day. And they said, 'Come forth and do according to the word of the king, and ye shall live.' And they said, 'We will not come forth, neither will we do the word of the king, to profane the Sabbath day.' And they hasted to give them battle. And they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, saying, 'Let us die in our innocency.' And they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they died, they and their wives and children." These soldiers of Antiochus preferred to die rather than break the Sabbath. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been willing to die rather than bow down to an image, and Daniel had been willing to die rather than give up his daily prayers. It was these stories of the great steadfastness of Daniel and of his friends which inspired the Jews in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes to remain loyal to God in the face of persecution and death.

Daniel Did not Know What the Outcome Would Be. Daniel was a Puritan. He lived a long way from Plymouth Rock; he had been dead for two thousand years when that compact was signed in the cabin of the Mayflower. He had never read a line of John Milton; he knew nothing about Oliver Cromwell. But he was a Puritan none the less. He insisted upon the rights of the individual conscience as against the dictates of arbitrary authority. Let King Darius publish his decree! Let the princes and presidents insist that the laws of the Medes and Persians alter not! Let them utter their threat about the den of lions! This ancient Puritan will stand for the right as God gives him to see the right, taking all the risks involved. He will stake his all upon fidelity to duty and trust to the march of events to justify the wisdom of his course. When you find that spirit in any land or age you find the Puritan.

His enemies had it in writing that if he offered his prayer he would be eaten by the lions. Poor, deluded, short-sighted mortals, that was all they knew! Daniel himself did not know what the outcome might be—he went like Abraham of old, not knowing whither he went. It was another instance where moral faith transcended the considerations of expediency. The man who walks in the light true to the highest he sees, keeping his life faced toward the great right things of justice, mercy and truth, walks in safety. Yea, though he walks through the valley of the shadow of death, he fears no evil, for God is with him. Facing his life steadily upon righteousness he knows that nothing can permanently defeat him!—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Quest of Life.

There is Safety in Courage Combined with Innocence. Lions are not cannibalistic, they will not devour their own species, lion respects lion; and so they saw in Daniel the features of their own royal breed, and left him unscathed. How majestic is courage combined with innocence! This is the main lesson of Daniel in the lions' den. He had faith in God, was absolutely loyal to the truth, and with a pure heart dared everything and triumphed. Our defense from the powers of darkness is in the heroism of faith and purity.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in Gates of Dawn.

The Right Frontage in Life. When this young man in Babylon went into his room and knelt in prayer—"his windows open toward Jerusalem"—he gave his life another sort of frontage than that furnished by the streets of Babylon. He faced his soul upon the highest—there before the eyes of his moral imagination was the city of God.

With that open window clearly in view let me speak to you about the importance of giving every life the right sort of frontage. The young man in Babylon gave his daily life a spiritual outlook. It was five hundred miles in an air line from Daniel's window to Jerusalem. But there are distances which are not measured in miles. When he looked through that open window in the attitude of prayer, Jerusalem, with all it stood for, was within arm's length. He reached forth and was lifted by it to a higher level of thought and feeling. The One who is not far from any one of us brought that praying man into a sense of august fellowship with himself, into the joy of personal participation in the accomplishment of a regal purpose.

"Spiritual frontage," Francis G. Peabody called it in speaking to Harvard men. The inner life demands it for its own self-realization. If the soul looks out upon nothing better than the streets of Babylon, rich and gay though they may be; if the mind reads only the newspaper and hears only the talk which reflects the sentiments of Babylon; if the heart finds its chief pleasure in places of light amusement or in the more frivolous forms of social contact; if the inmost nature never rises above the smoke and soot of these commonplace pursuits, then inevitably the best that is in a man grows small, thin and anæmic. If he prizes moral vigor, stamina and endurance he must have the windows of his life open continually upon the superb sources of strength.

Here is a young man who has come up to the city of New York to study or to work out for himself a business career. He may feel that he is in Babylon. He sees the wealth and the power of this mighty city. He sees the social gaiety and the alluring temptation. He is separated from those he loves and from the wholesome restraints of home. He has no one to ask him how he spends his evenings.

He is tempted to change the clean, honest habits of his youth and to lower those standards which he was taught to hold high. He is tempted to sacrifice principle to pleasure and to follow the line of least resistance because it will save him the effort involved in maintaining his spiritual ascent. You may spell his particular temptation in all sorts of ways, but it all comes to this—it is the everlasting temptation to let go the higher ideals of Jerusalem and to make himself comfortably at home in the lower wards of Babylon. In that hour he needs the steadying influence of the "spiritual frontage" suggested by the open window. He needs the moral oxygen of those Judean hills blowing in upon him like a tonic infusion of blood and iron.—Condensed from The Quest of Life, by Dean Charles R. Brown.

Whosoever Putteth His Trust in Jehovah Shall be Safe. In this affirmation from the Book of Proverbs, what does the word *safe* mean? Does it mean that one who trusts God will never be harmed, never suffer calamity? Assuredly not. Does it mean that one who trusts God will suffer less than one who does not trust him? Rather is it true that the best men suffer more and the worst men suffer less, for the best men have the greater capacity for suffering. It means what Socrates meant when he said, "Know this of a surety that no evil can happen to a good man either in this life or after death." Burdens and trouble and sorrow and suffering are the lot of the Christian, from these is he not kept, but by them he is disciplined, not overcome, in them he is safe, and in God's good plan for him they are not an evil, they work together for good.

"How do you keep so calm under heavy burdens?" Mr. Gladstone was once asked. "That is the secret," he answered, pointing to a framed Scripture text which faced him at every morning's awakening. The text read, "Thou wilt

keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth thee."

For Discussion. 1. Darius illustrates the danger of adopting suggestions without considering their consequences. The probable consequences of acts which we contemplate should always be carefully considered, especially in their bearings upon others.—Dr. J. F. McFadyen.

2. The story as a study in jealousy. Is Dr. J. D. Jones right in his assertion that there is always possible murder at the heart of envy?

3. The value of a place and a time for prayer. Disadvantages of easy performance of duty, as praying in bed, instead of kneeling; worshipping God by a Sunday walk, instead of attending church, etc. "There is many a business man today who will tell you he has no time to pray," said Dwight L. Moody. "But look at Daniel. He had the whole, or nearly the whole, of the king's business to attend to. He was prime minister, secretary of state, and secretary of the treasury, all in one. He had to attend to all his own work, and to give an eye to the work of lots of other men, and yet he found time to pray; not just now and then, nor once in a while, not just when he happened to have a few moments to spare, but 'three times a day.'"

4. His sleep fled from the king: worry and sleep.

Heed how thou livest. Do no act by day
Which from the night shall drive thy peace away.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How far do the Books of Kings and Chronicles carry the history of Israel? 2. How far is it continued in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah? 3. What are the dates of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the return from Exile? 4. What was the effect of the exile on the Jews? 5. Where in the Bible will you find the first two and a half verses of Ezra duplicated? (The last two verses of 2 Ch.) 6. What do you infer from this? 7. Why is Cyrus called King of Persia? 8. Where in the Book of Isaiah is it declared that God commissioned Cyrus to deliver the exiles? (Isa. 44.21-28). 9. Did Cyrus believe in only one God? 10. What reasons had Cyrus for permitting the Jews to return? 11. What reasons can you give for the return of the exiles? 12. Did they return from religious or from political motives? 13. What reasons had they who remained in Babylon? 14. What became of the Jews who remained in Babylon? 15. What example of team work do we find in this event? 16. When had the temple vessels been carried off to Babylon? 17. Could modern history be written so as to show God's hands in the affairs of nations? 18. Do you think God has as much interest in the welfare of America as he had in that of Judah?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
DANIEL'S HEROIC FAITH

Beginning the Lesson. What is said about Daniel in the third verse of our chapter? A little girl was once reading this verse, and instead of saying "an excellent spirit was in him," she said, "an excellent spine was in him." Her reading was true, for certainly Daniel was a man of "firm backbone," as we say; no one could tempt him to be untrue to his principles. How did he first prove this, as told in the first chapter of Daniel?

The story of Daniel in the lions' den is one that you learned and loved as a little child. Who will tell it?

Playing the Story. "Bobbie, you mustn't roar so dre'ffly!—you ain't head-lion today; you're o'ny a cub. Let Tommy roar first; we must all play fair, or not at all!" These were the words which a traveller (Miss Stuart) heard on the outskirts of a Sussex, England, village. Just a few yards beneath her a little girl of about twelve was standing with a stick in her hand, which she waved for the direction of a group of children gathered in a circle still lower down. In the center of the group a little boy of five or six was kneeling with his hands held up as if in prayer. It was plain to see that he was lame, for a crutch lay beside him, and now and then he had to put down his hand to the ground to steady himself. Round this odd little object were gathered four other youngsters, a ragged old spaniel, and a dilapidated teddy-bear.

"Now, first head-lion forward an' roar. That's you, Tommy dear. Be ready: no wool-gathering!"

Tommy, a large, solemn boy of seven slowly dropped forward from his

squatting position on to his hands and knees, and emitted a blood-curdling growl. Bobbie (second cub), without waiting for his summons, suddenly threw himself on to his extended paws, and roared fearsomely. And then he said: "Tommy ain't no good for a head-lion; he's—he's more like a lop-eared rabbit. You let me be head-lion an' I'll show you. An' Arthur, too, he's such a prayin' kind o' Daniel; if I did Daniel I'd walk about an' whistle, just to show I weren't afraid o' no lions."

"You can't be everybody," said the conductor severely; "remember, father said that if we didn't share and share we couldn't play Bible stories at all. Now, Kitty, you're second cub. Come forward ever so gently an' lick Daniel's hand." After this there was a general demand from the whole party in the chalk-pit for "King Darius, Liveforever," and the director herself was about to assume this desirable rôle when a sudden idea struck her.

"Here, Bobbie, you shall be King Darius instead o' me; come up gently now! Mind, King Darius had a 'lamentable voice,' and you must speak as if you was ever so sorry for Daniel and 'spected to find his bones an' things all lyin' about the den. Stand just there, an' peer in, an' cry very sadly."

But at this juncture Bobbie, peering in every direction but the right one, with a fine assumption of kingly nonchalance, spied the traveller in her bracken covert and gave the alarm.

"I believe we oughter be gettin' home-along now," Emily said; but Bobbie objected loudly: "We ain't done the best bit!—we ain't frown the wicked gentlemen, an' their wives an' fam'lies, over into the den yet! We've got them all ready. Em'ly, let me jest frow the wicked gentlemen over an' then we'll all go home to tea."

"I did not see my little make-believes again," said the narrator, "but I feel sure that they are not only playing Bible, but learning to live Bible, too—God bless them!"

Daniel's Character. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God, Dan. 6.5. What a testimony from his bitterest enemies! Would that it could be said of all of us! He had never taken a bribe; he had never been connected with a "ring." Ah, how his name shines! He had commenced to shine in his early manhood, and he shone right along. Now he is an old man, an old statesman, and yet this is their testimony.

Character is worth more than money. Character is worth more than anything else in the wide world. I would rather in my old age have such a character as that which Daniel's enemies gave him, than have raised over my dead body a monument of gold reaching from earth to sky.—D. L. Moody.

Does One's Attitude in Prayer Matter? In one of Theodore Roosevelt's letters to his children he speaks of seeing Archie lying prone upon his bed and saying his prayers while Marie, the nurse, was kneeling at the bedside. Archie had met with a mishap and could not kneel, and the nurse was kneeling for him!

Does one's attitude in prayer matter? The reverential posture as well as the reverential words is a part of our worship. In the case of Daniel had he lain upon his bed and prayed he would have seemed to his enemies to have denied his Lord, to have given up his religion, and he would have lost his influence as a worshipper of the true God.

You remember how in Tom Brown's School Days a new boy entered the school one day. The first night he looked around the big sleeping room with its twelve occupants and then bravely dropped on his knees and prayed before them all. Two or three boys laughed and sneered, and one threw a slipper at the kneeling boy, calling him "a snivelling young sham." Tom promptly threw his boot at the young bully; tumult was quieted by the entrance of the verger who put out the lights. Tom could not sleep. He thought of his mother and the promise he had made her that he would never forget at night to kneel by his bedside and pray. Then he thought of how he had broken that promise. The first few nights after coming to the school he found that the other boys did not pray, and he had waited till the lights were out and then he stole out of bed to say his prayers when no one could see him. Then he began to think that he might as well say his prayers in bed, and then that it didn't matter whether he was kneeling or sitting or lying down. And next it came to pass that for the last year he had not prayed at all.

Poor fourteen-year-old Tom! "The first and bitterest feeling was the sense of his own cowardice. He had lied to his mother, to his conscience, to his God.

And then the poor little weak boy had done what he, braggart as he was, dared not do. He resolved to write home and tell his mother what a coward her son had been. And then peace came to him as he resolved to bear his testimony next morning. The morning would be harder than the night to begin with, but he felt that he could not afford to let one chance slip. Several times he faltered, for the devil showed him, first, all his old friends calling him 'Saint' and 'Square-toes,' and a dozen other hard names: and then came the more subtle temptation, 'Have I any right to begin it now? Ought I not rather to pray in my own study, letting other boys know that I do so, and trying to lead them to it, while in public, at least, I should go on as I have done?'" But he resolved to follow the right impulse.

Next morning in the face of the whole room he knelt down to pray, and rose from his knees comforted and ready to face the whole world. It was not needed: two other boys besides Arthur had already followed his example, and he went down to the great school with a glimmering of another lesson in his heart—the lesson that he who has conquered his own cowardly spirit has conquered the whole outward world.

"Odd Man Out." The game of "Odd Man Out" has many forms, but it always means that the man who is odd has to go out of the ring and hunt the others, or be hunted by them. He has to stand out from the others and play his part of the game alone, and as the butt and sport of all the rest. It is often hard work and tries your pluck.

Now, if a boy means to keep a clean heart, and a clean ear, and a clean tongue, he must be willing to be "odd man out." Joseph was "odd man out" because he refused to countenance the dirty stories and dirty deeds of his ten brothers. Jonathan was "odd man out" when he took David's side against his own father—King Saul. And Daniel was "odd man out," and went to the lions' den rather than give up praying to God.

Merry-makers at the game of life, play the game well. Follow your great leader—Christ, and never be ashamed to be "odd man out" for him.—Forbes Jackson, in Twilight Tales.

Delivered from Lions. Within a week after my conversion, thirty years ago, I passed by the window of a picture store in St. Louis, and I saw hanging in a window an engraving of a painting of Daniel in the den of lions. The prophet, with his hands behind him, and the lions circling about him, is looking up and answering the king's question. The one thing I was in mortal fear of, in those days, was that I might go back to my sins. I was a drunken lawyer in St. Louis when I was converted, with no power over an appetite for strong drink, and I was so afraid of a bar-room or hotel or a club that when I saw I was coming to one I would cross the street. I was in torment day and night. No one had told me anything about the keeping power of Jesus Christ. I stood before that picture and a great hope and faith came into my heart, and I said: "Why, these lions are all about me—my old habits, and sins—but the God that shut the lions' mouths for Daniel can shut them for me." I learned that my God was able. He had saved me and he was able to deliver me from the lions. Oh, what a rest it was!—C. I. Scofield.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. "He who purposes in his heart to not defile himself may reasonably expect deliverance from the lions' den."

A brave man hazards life, but not his conscience.—Schiller.

The men who stand straightest in the presence of sin bow lowest in the presence of God.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. IV. Daniel's Heroic Faith.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. With what history do the Books of Kings and Chronicles close? 2. Where does the Book of Ezra take up the story? 3. How far do the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah carry the history? 4. Who had built a "house of Jehovah" in Jerusalem, and what had become of it? 5. What does secular history tell us about Cyrus? 6. How does God "stir up the spirit" of men today? 7. Why did some of the exiles return? 8. Why did some of them stay in Babylon? 9. Describe the route that the returning exiles took. 10. Was the return from Babylon a pleasure or a duty, or both? 11. How did those who remained help to build the temple? 12. Do they deserve credit for this? 13. Are we doing all we can to strengthen the hands of active workers in mission fields? 14. Is this our duty?

THE FIRST RETURN FROM EXILE

Golden Text

We know that to them that love God all things work together for good. Romans 8.28

LESSON Jeremiah 29.10-14; Ezra 1.1-11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 85.1-9

REFERENCE MATERIAL Psalms 85; 86; 122; 123; 124; 130; 131; Jeremiah 29

JEREMIAH 29.10 For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

EZRA 1.1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem. 6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. 7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put in the house of his gods; 8 even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A PROPHECY OF THE RETURN FROM EXILE, Jer. 29.10. Jeremiah prophesied that the exile would last seventy years, and the seventy is to be regarded, of course, as a round number. From the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. to the return in 538 B. C. was forty-eight years, but exactly seventy years intervened between the destruction of the temple and its restoration in 516 B. C. *Thus saith Jehovah, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.* "So it is ever with the Divine word. However appearances may be to the contrary, and however long the delay, the laws of God are immutable, their result inevitable."

II. THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS, Ezra 1.1-4.

"We cannot think a gracious thought,
We cannot feel a good desire,
Till thou, who call'dst a world from naught,
The power in our hearts inspire."

God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to the gracious thought of allowing the exiled Jews to return to their own land. Cyrus's own ulterior reason was, no doubt,

to secure the gratitude of the Jews and to build up in Judah a friendly buffer nation between himself and the Egyptian power. "The divine energy does not work apart from but within those ordinary mental processes which have to do with the actions of men." And Cyrus was thus inspired *that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished.* "We are not to think that the Lord just arbitrarily made good the prophecy of Jeremiah simply to make Jeremiah's prophecy true. There is deeper reason underlying God's dealings than this. The very firmness of Jeremiah's conviction that God would restore his nation helped to bring about a situation favorable to that restoration—helped keep alive in other hearts the expectation of a glorious return. The Almighty seems to make his activities in part depend upon the expectations of his people, and this is only to say that the Lord is dependent upon a spirit of faith in the hearts of his followers" (Bishop McConnell). It was *in the first year* of his reign, the year that he captured Babylon and began his rule over the Babylonian Empire, 538 B. C., that Cyrus issued his decree. Cyrus is called *King of Persia* because he was of Persian descent and Persia was the most important of his conquests: originally king only of Elam, he conquered Media, Persia, Lydia, and then Babylon. By heralds and by written official documents he sent his proclamation *throughout all his kingdom,* as far as Media, Josephus adds.

Symbolic Figure of Cyrus. At the Base is His Name in Cuneiform Characters

It was Cyrus's policy to claim the favor of the gods of every people, and he began his proclamation thus: *All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me.* See Light from Oriental Life. *And he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem* (see Ezra 6.3-5), by allowing, as he hereby proclaimed, the Jews themselves to return and build it. "For an outsider he came to a wonderfully sure understanding of the sort of justice that would be pleasing to the Lord of the Jews" (McConnell). The desire of the Jews to return was religious rather than patriotic: the restoration of the temple was their main object. Cyrus did not order them to return, he merely permitted their return. Let the native Babylonians as well as Jews help the returning Jews of their place *with silver and gold and with goods and with beasts,* besides the voluntary gifts for the temple, Cyrus further decreed.

III. THE RESPONSE TO THE PROCLAMATION, Ezra 1.5-11. The majority of the Jews preferred to remain in the land of their exile, but the hereditary rulers of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (some also from Ephraim and Manasseh, 1 Ch. 9.3) prepared to depart, and their neighbors *strengthened their hands* as Cyrus had bade. "The idea is that of 'grasping,' 'laying hold on the hand with the view of strengthening or supporting.' The Jews who sought to return were like a convalescent essaying to walk and needing assistance." How history is being repeated today in the Zionist movement!

In the reigns of Jehoiachim, 2 Ch. 36.7, and of Jehoiachin (2 K. 24.13) and of Zedekiah (2 K. 25.13), the sacred vessels of the temple had been carried off to Babylon. These Cyrus now returned, having them given into the hands of *Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah,* the court name, it is believed, for Zerubbabel. The foundation of the temple is ascribed to both, Ezra 3,8; 5.16. Some authorities think, however, that he was a son of Jehoiachin and uncle of Zerubbabel. There were five thousand and four hundred vessels of gold and silver. Those mentioned in the omitted verses total 2499: whether some were omitted from the itemized list, or whether some of the figures were wrongly copied, does not matter. "Is not this dry enumeration a strange item to come in the forefront of the narrative of such an event? We might have expected some kind of pro-

duction of the enthusiasm of the returning exiles, some account of how they were sent on their journey, something which we should have felt worthier of the occasion than a list of bowls and nine and twenty knives. But it is of a piece with the whole of the first part of this Book of Ezra, which is mostly taken up with a similar catalogue of the members of the expedition. The list here indicates the pride and joy with which the long hidden and often desecrated vessels were received. We can see the priests and Levites gazing at them as they were brought forth, their hearts, and perhaps their eyes, filling with sacred memories. The Lord had 'turned again the captivity of Zion' and these sacred vessels lay there, glittering before them, to assure them that they were not as 'them that dream.' Small things become great when they are the witnesses of a great thing. It is almost within the lifetime of living men that all Scotland was thrilled with emotion, by the discovery, in a neglected chamber, of a chest in which lay, forgotten, the crown and scepter of the Stuarts. A like wave of feeling passed over the exiles as they had given back to their custody these temple vessels" (Maclaren).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me, verse 2. Cyrus was the worshiper of many gods; he was ready to worship Jehovah the God of the Jews just as he was to worship the many gods of the Babylonians. His special god was Marduk, as his cylinder inscription shows. Here is the translation: "Marduk, the great god of the Babylonians, searched through all lands, he saw him, and he sought the righteous prince after his own heart, whom he took by the hand. Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called by name, to sovereignty over the whole world he appointed him. . . . May all the gods whom I brought into their own cities daily before Bel and Nabu pray that I may have a long life, may they speak a gracious word for me, and may they say to Marduk, my lord, 'Cyrus, the king who worships thee, and Cambyses his son.'"

He hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, verse 2. As discovery of papyri on the island of Elephantine opposite the town of Assuan in Egypt proves, at the time of the events of this lesson there was a Jewish colony settled there whose temple was destroyed by the Egyptians. A letter of 408 B. C. beginning: "To our master Bagoas, governor of the Jews. Thy servants Jedoniah and associates, priests in the city of Elephantine"—asks help in these words: "If our master thinketh well to build this temple seeing they permit us not to build it, lo, unto thy friends and clients which are here in Egypt let a letter be sent from thee concerning the temple of the God Jahu (Jehovah) in the city of Elephantine to build it even as it was before." Another papyrus contains the answer of Bagoas: "Thou shalt say in Egypt before Arsames (the governor) concerning the altar-house of the God of Heaven, which was built before our time, before Cambyses, in Elephantine, which Vidrang . . . destroyed in the fourteenth year of King Darius, that it is to be rebuilt in its place as it was before, and that meat-offerings and frankincense shall be offered upon this altar, as was done formerly."

Let him go up to Jerusalem, verse 3. There is a small cylinder in the British Museum on which Cyrus is represented as saying: "I assembled all those nations and I caused them to go back to their countries."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was the name of the last Babylonian king? Who conquered him and his empire? What does the account in Daniel say? Whom did Cyrus appoint as viceroy in Babylon? When had the Jews been taken into captivity? What was the reason for the captivity? When had the sacred vessels of the temple been brought to Babylon? (2 Ch. 36.7; 2 K. 24.13; 25.13). What foreign ruler was the tool in the hands of God that brought about the captivity?

The Exiles who Returned. The counsel which Jeremiah sent to the early exiles (Jer. 29.1-20) was to identify themselves with the interests of their new country, to settle down into orderly and industrious lives. They followed his advice. "The peculiar genius for trade, which the Jews have manifested ever

since," writes Professor Kent, "was probably first developed amidst the favoring conditions which surrounded them in the land of the two rivers. In contract tablets found at Nippur, and dating from the earlier part of the Persian period, many familiar Old Testament names recur, showing that by that time the Jews had been drawn into the streams of trade which flowed so strongly to and from Babylon."

The return to Jerusalem meant a long, hard journey; it meant, moreover, that the Jews must give up their houses and their business for a dreary spot in the home-land, must exchange the rich, well-watered gardens of Babylon for the barren Judean hills and an uncertain existence in Jerusalem. It required great hardihood as well as deep religious feeling to accept Cyrus's permission to pull up stakes and return. For the sake of rebuilding the temple the most devout among the Jews did return. The greater part remained.

The Jews who Remained and their Descendants. The great leaders—Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel—preached the return, but the Jews clung to their exile in Babylonia. They increased in numbers and flourished. They established schools; they studied and revised their laws; they collected their traditions with greater zeal than ever before, and added new books to their literature. Occasionally, with the wealth which they accumulated, they performed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and while on the way bewailed their exile, more as a matter of custom than of heart.

During the first century of our era, two Jewish brothers—Asinai and Anilai—the leaders of a large Jewish community at Neherda, north of Babylon, became powerful, and with a bravery displayed a few centuries earlier by the Maccabees, established an independent Jewish state There the chief of the captives, the Resh Galutha, the position first occupied by Ezekiel, resided, and thither the Jews, still mourning the exile from which they would not return, flocked for consolation and advice.

The descendants of the exiles still inhabit every part of Babylonia. Of the one hundred thousand population of Bagdad, forty thousand are Jews. In the town of Hillah, upon the site of Babylon, there are probably as many Jews as Arabs. In the sacred cities of Meshed, places almost inaccessible to the non-Moslem, are now a few Jewish families. In the malarial marshes of lower Mesopotamia, far from other habitation, I have found Jewish families living alone, cultivating their rice-fields as in the days of the exile. In general, the modern Bagdad Jew, ground down by oppression, is an ignorant, loathsome creature. While forgetting much of the good of his own religion and traditions, he has adopted much of the superstition of the Arabs.—Edgar James Banks, in The Sunday School Times.

The Book of Ezra. See p. 24 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The great caravan would scarcely have taken the direct route across the desert to Damascus. They probably traveled up the Euphrates River Valley, along the route which was afterwards called "The Royal Road," up to the ancient city of Haran, Abraham's resting-place, and then westward across the river at the ford of Carchemish. From there they went southward by the way of Aleppo and Hamath to Damascus and on till they reached the ruined city of Jerusalem. See the two routes indicated on our large colored map. The similar journey of Ezra's caravan required four months, as we know from Ezra 7.8,9.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

It is always wise to illustrate a lesson or enforce a lesson truth by recalling to the minds of your pupils similar Biblical events or teachings. Today question them about the release of the children of Israel from their captivity in Egypt, and dwell upon the trouble the Hebrews had in getting away from Pharaoh. Recall how they "asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked." Then contrast with that exodus this of the Jews from Babylon, with Cyrus's freely granted permission, his widespread proclamation, his bidding the people help those who returned with silver and gold and jewels and beasts as well as with free-will offerings for the temple.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
STRIKING MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Beginning the Lesson. In Morocco the people do not speak of the death of a man high in position but say instead that "his destiny is closed." We have seen the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity long threatened, the destruction of city and temple, the deportation of the people, and the death of the Hebrew nation accomplished, its destiny apparently closed. When Isaiah prophesied the fall of Judah he always added that a "remnant" would return. During the first half of the exile it was the prophet Ezekiel and during the last half the great prophet whose words are recorded in Isaiah 30 to 55, who kept the hope of return constantly before the exiles. But to one who has not followed the prophecies and who hears for the first time the history it must come as a surprise to learn that the destiny of the Jews as a people was not closed at the Exile. The Exile was, in fact, only their preparation for their supreme mission to the world.

The Spirit of Those Homeward Bound. The exile was a blessing considerably disguised at first, but in the end gratefully acknowledged. It was a nation that was carried into captivity, but a Church that returned; the Jewish Church took the place of the Hebrew People. When they went into exile, the great majority could scarcely be distinguished from their heathen neighbors. They were indeed sifted during the exile, and those who returned were passionately loyal to Jehovah. As Dr. Maclaren expresses it, colors burned in on china are permanent, and the furnace of bondage had, at least, effected this, that it fixed monotheism forever in the inmost substance of the Jewish people.

The exile effected more. The people who returned were under the guidance of priests, and they went back for the express purpose of rebuilding the temple and restoring worship there in accordance with their ritual. They acknowledged that the sins of their nation had merited the punishment of exile, and they eagerly desired reconciliation with Jehovah. "They went out without a national knowledge of the Law, and they returned with a passion for the Law which redeems the commonplaces of their life with vast sublimities."

Moreover, their conception of Jehovah was different on their return. Where formerly they had thought of him mainly as the God of Israel, the God of Canaan alone, they now knew him to be God of the universe. Professor Kent explains this: "Absorbed among races more powerful and more highly civilized than they, the Jews were forced to admit that they were only one of the weak families of the earth. The experience was painful but valuable. It not only broadened their conception of Jehovah's character, but also led them to recognize their complete dependence upon him. They saw for the first time that they were unique among nations simply because of their unique relation to the God of the universe. Their attitude changed toward the great heathen world about them. No longer could they ignore their neighbors, or merely consider them when they disturbed the peace of Israel. Beginning with the period of the exile, the nations figure prominently in the utterances of the prophets. From the same epoch dates the rise of a broad religious philosophy of history. The nations, drawn together by force, began dimly to recognize that they belonged to one family; while certain inspired Jews grasped the greater truth that one Father stood at the head of that family, and that Cyrus was Jehovah's anointed as truly as was Jehoiachin. The exile proved, as Amos predicted (Am. 9.9), a sifting process, for it effectually separated the faint-hearted and sceptical from the brave and true. Many—perhaps the majority—were found wanting; but those who endured the ordeal and remained faithful were devoted to the worship of the Jehovah of the prophets with a passionate zeal, which was in striking contrast to the popular indifference that daunted pre-exilic prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah. Bound together, not by political bands, but by common suffering and the common faith, the royal few proved the nucleus out of which, during the succeeding centuries, grew the Jewish church."

The Help of Those Left in Babylon. King Cyrus granted no sum of money and levied no tax for the expense of his subjects' return to Judea; he merely counseled the people to help them with silver and gold. Neighborly good-will was shown everywhere, for "all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things." The Jews who remained in the land of their

captivity had a share in the work of the restoration of the temple and its worship at Jerusalem, as well as those who returned and did the work.

"I don't see you," said a father when his son proudly brought home a group picture in which he claimed to be represented. "Why, you see that big, fat boy there, don't you, father? Well, I am right behind him!' The Jews who remained occupied a similar position; they were right behind the prominent ones in the picture, but it was their assistance that made possible the return of their more stout-hearted and religious brothers.

The invisible position behind the active worker does not seem so glorious, but it is usually equally essential. Dr. Watkinson uses for another purpose an illustration which is pertinent here. In the valley of Chamouni at the foot of Mont Blanc there is a notable monument. It represents two figures, the splendid representation of Saussure, the great scientist, and by his side the image of Balmat, the guide. Saussure was a great thinker; Balmat was a poor peasant. But Saussure would never have scaled Mont Blanc if Balmat had not shown him the way; and so the people, with a fine instinct, put them both on the monument—the great philosopher and the little peasant—for together they gave to mankind a new world of science and of romance. The obscure helper does not often get on the monument; but he deserves the position.

Human and Divine Forces at Work. There is a great sermon of Horace Bushnell's entitled "Every Man's life a plan of God." It is based on the statement in the first verse of the first chapter of Ezra in regard to Cyrus. The historian says that God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to permit those who would to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. What was Cyrus's own motive in doing this? It was part of his policy as king. His predecessors on the throne of Babylon had deemed it wise to deport conquered peoples to Babylonia and fill their places with imported people: Cyrus deemed the opposite a wise procedure, and he gained the good-will of his subjects by his generous dealings with them. Moreover, though he had made himself master of Western Asia, he still had the conquest of Egypt in view: he was far-sighted and must have recognized that a grateful people dwelling in Judea, the province bordering on Egypt, and the one which must be the basis of a campaign against the land of the Pharaohs, would be of great service to him.

How, then, can the sacred historian say that Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus? Dr. Maclaren answers: "The historian digs deeper to find the true cause. Cyrus was God's instrument, and the statesman's insight was the result of God's illumination. The divine causality moves men, when they move themselves. It was not only in the history of the chosen people that God's purpose is wrought out by more or less conscious and willing instruments. The principle laid down by the writer of the Book of Ezra is of universal application, and the true 'philosophy of history' must recognize as underlying all other so-called causes and forces the one uncaused Cause, of whose purposes kings and politicians are the executants, even while they freely act according to their own judgments, and, it may be, in utter unconsciousness of him. It concerns our tranquillity and hopefulness, in the contemplation of the bewildering maze and often heart-breaking tragedy of mundane affairs, to hold fast by the conviction that God's unseen hand moves the pieces on the board and presides over all the complications. Would that all politicians recognized the fact as clearly as this historian did!"

A Modern Parallel. In 1917 Mr. Balfour promised Lord Rothschild that the British Government would "favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and would use its best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object." The London Daily Chronicle in recording this message pertinently said, "One has to go back to Cyrus for a parallel." And another London paper commenting upon the message said: "It ought to be apparent to everybody that the persistence of a people like the Jews during two thousand years—a fact unparalleled in history—despite every attempt to crush them, holds a meaning far deeper than that which the secular historian offers. The purposes of God are being worked out, and we can begin to see light. The War is one thing as expounded by the politicians; it may be quite another as seen by the Eternal God, who remains Master in his own world."

Unexpected Instruments of God. The Bible, like Shakespeare, and yet in a sense far from Shakespeare's, seems to have stamped on it "All the world's a stage, and all men and women merely players." We are not isolated; we are not

independent. We are not drifting, rudderless, on shadowy seas. Somehow mysteriously to an end we cannot see, and under a Providence that never errs we are all instruments. Even Babylon is a golden cup in the Lord's hand, Jer. 51.7. This view of life fills all the Scriptures, and if I thought we really knew all Scripture, it would be enough to indicate it and pass on. But are we truly studying the Word of God? Can we name, for instance, the conqueror of whom God said, "Thou art my battle axe"? Or the tyrant of whom God said, "Thou art my servant"? God says to Cyrus, Thou art my battle axe; God says to Nebuchadnezzar, Thou art my servant. These men were strangers to the promises, bowing in worship to the gods of heathendom; yet, "Thou art *my* battle axe, Cyrus"; "Thou art *my* servant"—they were all instruments of Almighty God.

Who shall dare say what powers may be used by Heaven, if even Babylon be a Golden Cup in the Lord's hand? We are so apt to have contracted views. We are so prone to think God will only work by means of instruments we should have chosen, that when he contradicts us, and works in other ways we are blind to the presence of the Divine in it. Give him a wide sweep of Sovereignty. Remember his ways are not as ours.—G. H. Morrison, in Sun-Rise.

For Discussion. 1. The good accomplished by the Exile.

2. The return of the Jews to Jerusalem today. A few years ago Rabbi Hirsch of Chicago said: "The Zionists and nationalistic Jews who see in the Jewish race and the restoration of Palestine the chief concern of Judaism, who have prayed for years for a return to Zion, would drop dead with the shock if they had to go back."

3. The truth of God working through the personality of man has been the salvation of the world. Increase the personality and you increase the power.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the prophecy of Jer. 33.10,11? 2. Who were the prophets at this time? (Ezra 5.1). 3. Who occupied Samaria after the northern tribes were taken to Assyria? (2 K. 17.23,24). 4. Explain the origin of the feud between Jews and Samaritans of which we hear in the Gospels. 5. When was the foundation stone of the second temple laid? 6. What delayed the work? 7. Was the refusal to let the Samaritans help in building the temple right or wrong? 8. When was the building resumed? (Ezra 4.24). 9. What letter was then sent to Darius? (Ezra 5). 10. What was Darius's answer? (Ezra 6). 11. When was the second temple completed? 12. Could there have been many who recalled the first temple? 13. Whose attitude do you approve, that of the old men or of the young men? 14. How many Jewish temples occupied the same site; when was each built, and when and by whom was each destroyed? 15. What building now occupies the same site? 16. Is your church a power in your community? 17. What is the greatest unused opportunity before your church today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
AN EXAMPLE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Beginning the Lesson. For forty-eight years after the capture of Jerusalem the Jews lived in the land of their conqueror, but they never ceased to bewail their native land. The sorrows of the exiles in Babylon are told in the 137th Psalm:—

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

It was not God's will that they should stay for ever in exile. What had the prophet Jeremiah said was his purpose for them? Why had they been exiled? What did God wish them to learn by this punishment?

How God Kept a Great Promise. You have seen a mother punish her child and then lead him off to a quiet spot where he would have a chance to come to his senses. That was what God did for Judah. Judah needed long years of waiting in Babylon to bring it to its senses. I wonder if that is not the meaning of many a mysterious day of waiting in our own lives. I wonder if those weary days would not have been much shorter if we had only come to our senses sooner. The child who has been left in a room to himself for a long time imagines that his mother has forgotten him or that she no longer cares. The pious Hebrews among the exiles waited for two generations before the order came for the return, and from that time they waited for centuries for the Messiah's coming, and when the silence of God was broken at last they found that he had never forgotten and never ceased to care.

"That the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished." "Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia." It is an inspiration just to look at a man who always keeps his word. If it means so much to us to feel that we can depend upon the word of a fellow man, who after all can only help us in little things, what should it mean to us to feel—really feel—that we can depend upon the word of him upon whom everything of real importance to us depends!

No doubt there were many exiles who felt their case was hopeless because the king knew nothing about their God and his plans for their return. But God carried his point all the same. Today ye are saying it is useless to expect the cause of God to advance while such and such conditions continue to exist. No doubt we ought to do our best to remedy many existing conditions, but what we need most of all just now is to believe with all our hearts in a God who is powerful enough to go on with his work in spite of existing conditions. If the exiles had spent their lives trying to imagine how God would deliver them, it is safe to say that they never could have guessed the truth. But that did not affect the matter one way or another. The fact that we cannot see how help is coming might well trouble us for a moment if we were looking for help from a man, but God is not a man.

"Jehovah hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Not Cyrus, but the Lord. No pious Hebrew thought of giving the credit to Cyrus.—Condensed from Meditations, by Dr. Edward Leigh Pell.

All They that Were round about Them Strengthened their Hands. What do these words mean? Why did the Jews who remained in Babylon feel that it was their duty to share in the work of building the temple? Was it not their task as much as it was the task of those who returned? There was fine team work about the rebuilding of the temple: it could not have been built without the great leaders, Ezra and Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, nor without the people who returned and put their hands to the work, nor yet without the people who remained in Babylon but strengthened the hands of the people who returned by their gifts of money and silver and gold vessels and other goods and beasts of burden. Dean Charles R. Brown, writing in The Congregationalist, has this to say about the team work:—

"The military men tell us that for every soldier in the trenches there must be at least five other people working steadily somewhere in the rear. The soldier must have food and clothing which are produced and manufactured a long way from the trench. He must have a gun and munitions—and these modern weapons have voracious appetites. He must have his pay as he is rendering a most difficult and dangerous service, for the support of those he left behind. He must have a surgeon at hand and an ambulance corps and Red Cross nurses equipped with all the appliances which science and kindness, the two arms of that noble service, are set to furnish. All this costs money and effort. Therefore there must be another army five times as large as the one at the front working ceaselessly to make possible his heroic service.

"'And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts and with precious things.' And in this co-operative action they shared in the same sense of divine approval which was vouchsafed to those who steadfastly set their faces to go to Jerusalem. There are diversities of operation under the guidance of the same Spirit. The personal service of those who go to the foreign field to make known to men of alien race and tongue the riches of Christ is one, and the service of those who remain here busying themselves with gifts of silver and gold, with the duties

of direction and administration which make possible this world-wide healing, teaching, preaching, ministry is another no less vital element in that august enterprise."

Shaming One's Self. The silver and the gold which had been given for God's house by the king and his counselors and his princes and all Israel were "a free-will offering," Ezra said. It had been freely given, and must have been at the cost of much sacrifice on the part of some of the Israelites. Perhaps the spirit of sacrifice shown by the volunteers "shamed" those who remained into giving more freely than they otherwise would have done, just as it did in the case of the workers of the House of the Good Samaritan. The Youth's Companion gives a long account of how their free-will offerings were raised. The reports at a recent annual meeting were all discouraging, there was a deficit of six hundred dollars, the sum that had to be raised each year to pay the interest on the ten thousand dollar mortgage on the building. The work must be retrenched, said the directors.

Then one of the neighborhood women sprang to her feet and exclaimed in a shrill voice: "You ought to shame yourselves! You got no pizness to cut down de work! De Lord, he got plenty money! You got no faith! You got no pizness mit a debt. Pay it off! We women will pay one t'ousand tollar in one year; de directors pay nine t'ousand. I got one tollar here for working in de kitchen tonight. I gif dat now, and we get de rest of our t'ousand; and if you don't get yours, you ought to shame yourselves. You and we will all put our wheels to the shoulder and pay off de debt."

The last sentence saved the day; except for that, some one might have answered her with cold and dignified superiority. But the proposal that they all put their wheels to the shoulder relieved the tension by raising a laugh. One of the members of the board arose.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "the very least we can do is to accept this challenge. I do not see how it is possible for these women to raise one thousand dollars within a year, but if they do, surely we can manage to raise the other nine thousand." And so the directors voted.

Each of the women who attended the classes pledged twenty-five cents a week, and most of them paid it, although at the cost of great self-denial. They held a little fair and sold things of their own making, but the articles were crude and the returns small. In spite of hard work and great self-sacrifice, the fund grew slowly.

Just before Thanksgiving the women asked whether those accustomed to receive gifts of Thanksgiving dinners from the settlement might not give them up and let the money go toward the debt. The news of this last sacrifice led a famous singer to give her services at a concert in one of the churches. That brought the last of the thousand dollars, and something over, too.

At the next annual meeting the chairman of the board said: "I have great pleasure in reporting that we have closed the year with all our bills paid, and with the mortgage of ten thousand dollars discharged. We shamed ourselves and did it; and having done it, we are a little proud, and very grateful to the good woman whose timely challenge forced us to make the effort."

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

There is a hand that bends our deeds
To mightier issues than we planned.—Richard Hovey.

The sentences in the book of Providence are sometimes long, and you must read a great way before you understand their meaning.—Matthew Henry.

Behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.—Lowell.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. V. The First Return from Exile.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What would naturally be the first concern of the people after their return to Jerusalem? 2. What was their next wish? 3. If all our churches were destroyed what difference would it make? 4. What does our church do for our city? 5. Why did Zerubbabel refuse the help of the Samaritans? 6. What did the latter then do to hinder the work? 7. Why did the old men weep? 8. Why did the young men shout for joy? 9. What reasons had the people for gratitude to God? 10. Have we more cause for gratitude than had they?

THE TEMPLE REBUILT AND DEDICATED

Golden Text

**My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth
for the courts of Jehovah. Psalm 84.2**

LESSON Ezra 3.1 to 6.22 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 100

REFERENCE MATERIAL Haggai 1.1 to 2.23; Isaiah 62; Revelation 21.1 to 22.5

EZRA 3.10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, *saying,* For he is good, for his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' *houses,* the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: 13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

6.14 And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE CORNER-STONE LAYING, 3.10-13. In the spring following their return to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the governor, Jeshua, the high priest, priests, Levites and people, began preparations for re-building the temple by appointing the Levites over twenty years of age as overseers of the work. Then Jeshua, Kadmiel, the sons of Judah, and the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren, took charge of the workmen.

When the workmen laid the foundations the priests in their official robes blew the trumpets and the Levites sounded the cymbals in praise of the Lord as had been done in the time of David the king, and with songs they gave thanks to the Lord, saying, *For he is good, for his loving kindness endureth for ever toward Israel.* This realization of the goodness and mercy of God runs through Psalms 106, 107, 118, and 136. They were probably divided into two choirs which sang alternately. "If the 118th Psalm was originally appropriated to this occasion, it is easy to see with what force the two choral companies must have replied, in strophe and antistrophe: 'Open to me the gates of righteousness,' 'This is the gate through which the righteous shall enter'; or must have welcomed the foundation stone which, after all difficulty and opposition, had at last been raised on the angle of the rocky platform; or have uttered the formula which afterwards (Mt. 21.9) became proverbial for all such

A Priest with Trumpet

popular celebrations: 'Hosanna! Save us!'—'Blessed be whosoever cometh in the name of the Eternal'" (Stanley).

And *all the people shouted* with joy *because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid,* though *many of the priests and Levites* and others, *the old men* who had seen the first temple, were overcome and wept so loudly that one could not distinguish the sounds of weeping and of shouting. They could not help weeping as they recalled the magnificent temple which had stood there "in the good old days," and thinking of the hardships and poverty of the present, they could not believe it possible for another temple to be at all like the first, could scarcely believe that it was even worth while to build another. As Tennyson's words proclaim, "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

Jews' Wailing Place To-day. Western Wall of Temple Area, Jerusalem

II. THE DEDICATION, 6.14-16. Enemies delayed the building of the temple many years: read the intervening chapters. Haggai and Zechariah at last aroused the people to their work, Ezra 5.1,2, and these prophets continued to help by their inspiriting words. At last the temple was finished, *according to the commandment of the God of Israel and according to the decree of Cyrus,* as told in our last lesson, *and Darius,* in the sixth year of whose reign it was finished (not the Darius of Daniel's time), *in the month Adar,* February-March, *and Artaxerxes king of Persia.* Artaxerxes reigned 465-423 B.C., and could not have aided in the rebuilding of the temple which was finished in 515 B.C., but according to Ezra 7.19 he gave vessels for the temple service. And they *kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.*

The Name Artaxerxes

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who gave the Jews permission to return to Judah? How did he help them with means for rebuilding the temple? Who built the first temple? When and by whom was it destroyed?

Four Persian Kings. Cyrus died in 529 B.C.; his son Cambyses who succeeded him committed suicide in 522 B.C.; Gamuta the usurper was murdered after seven months' reign by a confederation of Persian nobles, among them Darius Hystaspis who then became king and who was the real founder of the Persian Empire.

Four Main Groups of Jews after the Return. At the time of our lesson the Jews were located in four main groups: the exiles who remained in Babylonia, the remnant who returned to Judah, the hybrid population of Samaria, and the refugees in Egypt. About the fate of those who remained in Babylonia we heard last week. The Jews who had fled to Egypt were probably quickly absorbed in the Gentile population there. Our lessons now follow the fortunes of the brave remnant who returned to Judah to rebuild at Jerusalem the temple and to reëstablish there the old-time worship.

The Erection of the Altar of Burnt-Offerings and the Beginning of the Building of the Temple. The journey from Babylon must have required many months. Upon arriving, the first work was necessarily the building of

houses and the tilling of the ground so that the people could live. But as early as the seventh month after their return the altar of burnt-offering was rebuilt, doubtless upon the site of the old altar, and there the offerings were sacrificed according to the law of Moses. In the second month of the second year after the return a start was made with the rebuilding of the temple. Money was contributed to pay the masons and carpenters and furnish food and drink and oil to the men of Sidon and Tyre who brought cedar trees from Lebanon to Joppa on the coast, whence they were transported to Jerusalem. The service at the laying of the foundation is part of the theme of our lesson.

The Building Interrupted by the Opposition of the Samaritans. The Samaritans came and asked Zerubbabel and the chief men to permit them to join in the building of the temple, claiming that they had worshiped the same God since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria. But Zerubbabel and the rest refused to let them help, for they alone would build the temple and carry out the order of Cyrus king of Persia.

Who were the Samaritans? When the Assyrians conquered Samaria (2 K. 17.23-41), colonists from Babylonia were brought to Samaria to occupy the place of the deported Jews. Through intermarriage with the Jews who were allowed to remain, there was an admixture of Jewish blood in their descendants' veins, which gave them a certain kinship with the Jews—a fact which the latter in the time of Christ refused to admit. The Babylonians had found the land overrun by lions and other wild beasts, and they had besought the Assyrian king Esarhaddon to send them an Israelitish priest to teach them how to worship "the God of the land," for they thought this affliction had come upon them through their failure to worship him. Their request was granted, and they added the worship of Jehovah to that of their many gods. Therefore they could say when they asked for a share in the work of rebuilding the temple that they sought Jehovah as the Jews did, and had sacrificed unto him since the days of Esarhaddon.

Esarhaddon

The refusal so angered the "adversaries of Judah and Benjamin" that they resolved to prevent the Jews from building, and they succeeded in interrupting the work until the reign of Darius king of Persia, Ezra 4.1-5,24.

The Building of the Temple Resumed in the Time of Darius. During this time of opposition the Jews were busy in preparing their new homes and restoring the ancient cities, starting farms and constructing roads, and they began to argue that God's time for restoring his house had not yet come. Then droughts came and crops were bad, tokens of God's displeasure they believed, and the preaching of their prophets Haggai and Zechariah aroused them from their indifference. "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your own ceiled houses, while this temple lies in ruins?" questioned Haggai. "And Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and the spirit of the rest of the people, so that they came and worked on the temple of Jehovah." See Ezra 5.1,2, and Haggai 1.

The Opposition of Persian Officials. Persian officials of the Province beyond the River inquired by what authority the Jews were rebuilding the temple and the walls of the city, but the work went on while these officers sent a report of the work to Darius and awaited an answer. After Darius had investigated the archives and found a record of the decree of Cyrus, he ordered these Persian officers to aid in the building of the temple. See Ezra 5 and 6.

The Dedication of the Temple. Darius's order was carried out, and by the sixth year of his reign the temple was completed and dedicated. The keeping of the Passover followed. "The second temple became a center toward which the Jews scattered throughout the world could turn in reverence and hope, the symbol of racial and religious unity. In distant lands, and among strange people, the pious Jew could greet the coming festival with the sweet words, 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of Jehovah.'

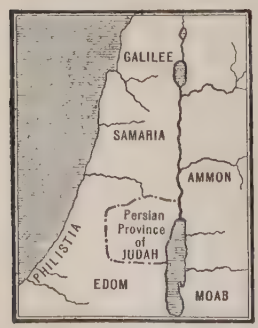
Thus the worship was perpetuated and the highest religion kept its place until the Christ came to complete its revelation and to enlarge its mission. That being so, the work of these men was important for us; we who are so distant from them in time and so different in circumstances owe to them a deep debt of gratitude."

The Three Temples. Three Jewish temples were built upon the same site. The first one, Solomon's, was built in 967 B. C. and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B. C.; the second one, Zerubbabel's, was built in 516 B. C.; and in 30 B. C. the third, or Herod's reconstructed temple, was begun. Herod's temple was destroyed during the siege by the Romans in 70 A. D. In 136 A. D., the Emperor Hadrian dedicated a temple on the same site to Jupiter, and in 637 the present Mohammedan Mosque of Omar was built.

Zerubbabel's Temple. The little which we know about this second Temple is thus described by Dean Stanley. "If the measurements indicated in the decree of Cyrus were acted upon, the space which it covered and the height to which it rose were greater than the corresponding dimensions of its predecessor. It must have been in the absence of metal and carving that it was deemed so inferior to the first temple. The Holy of Holies was empty. The ark, the cherubs, the tables of stone, the vase of manna, the rod of Aaron, were gone. The golden shields had vanished. Even the high priest, though he had recovered his official dress, had not been able to resume the breastplate with the oracular stones. Still, there was not lacking a certain splendor and solidity befitting the sanctuary of a people once so great, and of a religion once so self-contained. The high priest and his family were well lodged, with guest chambers and store chambers on a large scale for the temple furniture. The doors of the temple were of gold. In three particulars the general arrangements differed from those of the ancient sanctuary. With the rigid jealousy which rendered this period hostile to all which approached the Canaanite worship, there were no more to be seen in the courts those beautiful clusters of palm, and olive, and cedar, which had furnished some of the most striking imagery of the poetry of the monarchy, but which had also lent a shelter to the idolatrous rites that at times penetrated the sacred enclosure. 'No tree,' 'no grove,' we are told, 'was to be seen within the precincts.' Another feature characteristic of the period was the fortress tower built at the northwest corner of the sanctuary which, serving in the first instance as a residence of the Persian governor, became in later days the Tower of Antonia, from which, in like manner, the Roman garrison controlled the proud population of Jerusalem. Like to this was the sign of subjection to the Persian power preserved in the Eastern gate of the temple, called the Gate of Susa, from its containing a representation of the palace of the Persian capital. Thirdly, the court of the worshipers was divided for the first time into two compartments, of which the outer enclosure was known as the Court of the Gentiles or Heathens.—Dean Stanley, in History of the Jewish Church.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Do not lose sight of the fact that the Jews after their return from exile continued to be subjects of the Persian Empire. "Jerusalem and the surrounding districts were under the control of a governor (Pehah Tirshatha), who, though occasionally a Jew, must often have been an alien. And while the Persian rule was probably in general not oppressive, various circumstances must have made the position of the Jewish community rather a hard one. But in religion the Jews enjoyed a degree of freedom denied them in civil affairs."



Persian Province of Judah

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

You are in the habit of giving your pupils each week some definite work in preparing the next week's lesson. From our "Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson" you select and assign the questions, or you give other definite bits of work upon which you wish your pupils to come prepared. But do you call for this assigned work the following week? Pupils will soon pay no heed to assignments that may not be called for.

When pressed for time, it is a good plan *at the beginning* of the lesson to have each pupil write on a slip of paper: 1. His name, with the date. 2. A statement such as "I have," or "I have not," read such and such passages, thought about such and such problems, done such and such work—whatever the assignment has been.

And always make some use of these slips. Let two or three pupils read their answers aloud before the slips are collected. Or pass the papers and let a few answers be read by others than the writers. Or collect the slips and say a few words about the answers at the beginning of the next lesson. Or keep a record of those who do and those who do not give evidence of generally preparing assigned tasks, and deal with the unresponsive according to your best judgment, or if need be, ask the advice of more experienced teachers.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
WHAT GOD'S HOUSE SHOULD MEAN TO A COMMUNITY

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with the Historical Background.

The Peril of a Lowered Standard. There came an unwelcome offer of assistance from an unexpected quarter. The Israelites remaining in Palestine had intermarried with colonists brought in by the eastern conquerors until there was a mongrel population clinging to the worship of Jehovah but mingling with it many an alien element which lowered the tone of their religious life. These people of mixed blood and tradition now came forward and said, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye do."

The proposition seemed reasonable. Why not welcome these recruits even though "they followed not with us"? In the face of all the difficulties confronting the Jews was it a time to stand on ceremony or insist upon scruples? The harsh answer of the "regulars" may seem to some minds narrow and bigoted. "Ye have nothing to do with us," they said, "to build an house unto our God."

But every action must be judged in its setting. The spirit of exclusiveness may be hateful or it may be the one possible method of preserving a true faith and a worthy mode of life. The course of the British in refusing to intermarry with people of lower standards in the countries they have colonized has proved itself more beneficial to all concerned than has the easier habit of the Spaniards who have mingled their blood with that of races cherishing lower ideals and looser social customs. The religion of the Jews was not as yet sufficiently clear-cut in its own development to become as broadly missionary or as hospitably inclusive as would be natural and wholesome at some later stage of its growth. "Let all things be done decently and in order." First the blade, then the ear, and when the time is ripe demand the full corn. These early devotees were right in guarding against the lowering of standards until the principles for which they stood had become more firmly established.

In heroic fashion they refused material aid from a quarter where the acceptance of it would have weakened their power of spiritual appeal. The refusal of this assistance delayed the undertaking, but the outcome justified their action.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Congregationalist.

The Builders of the Second Temple. The first temple was the work of a king. Solomon stood sponsor for the enterprise, levying upon his subjects the necessary tribute of money and of labor to complete the work. The second temple was the work of the people themselves. The leaders are obscured by the presence in force of the unnamed, unnumbered people. The more democratic character of this second movement was for the health of Israel. Men receive more help of a permanent sort from that which they do for themselves than from the most elaborate results achieved for them by the generosity of others.

The pauperization of spirit which results in any church where some generous millionaire stands ready to relieve the congregation from the necessity of bearing its own financial burdens is pathetic. The commitment of a great interest to the rank and file may occasion a measure of delay; the earlier stages of the undertaking may sometimes be marred by the blunders of the unskilled, but all this is the price which we gladly pay for the culture of the many in the higher life of service.—Dr. Charles.

What the Temple Meant to the Jew. The temple was the great achievement of the Hebrew. It was what the Pyramids were to Egypt, the Parthenon

to the Greeks, the Colisseum to the Romans, St. Peter's to the Latins—but it was more. It meant to the Jew what the flag means to you, what the cross means to the Christian.—William S. Mitchell, in The Sunday School Journal.

What God's House Should Mean to a Community. The temple was the center of national gravity, and the concentration of thought upon its rebuilding was dictated by the consciousness that it was essential to the national life. Many today think that they can be all that they ought to be without church fellowship as well as with it. It is a grievous mistake; the social element is essential alike to the individual and national religious life. Forbes tells us that "the original forest in Sumatra is fast disappearing, but here and there a few trees have escaped the axe, and one cannot resist a feeling of pity for the solitude of these towering monarchs. They have withstood, in the company of their fellows, the storm and sun of centuries, but they survive their solitude only a very few seasons, getting feebler year by year, one great limb after another dying and dropping off, till all life ceases." It is much after this sort with the Christian life; it thrives only in the social atmosphere, it dwindles and dies in isolation. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

If you Have Ears to Hear and Eyes to See. When you enter the church you hear a sound—a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears; if you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself—a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome. The pillars of it go up like the brawny trunks of heroes; the sweet human flesh of men and women is moulded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable; the faces of little children laugh out from every corner-stone; the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness; sometimes in blinding light; now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish; now to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings, like the cry of thunder. Sometimes, in the silence of the night time, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead.—Charles Rann Kennedy, in The Servant in the House, quoted in The Pilgrim Magazine.

Why a Father Takes his Children to Church. I have been to church and Sunday-school with my children always, because in the light of some hundreds of years of history there is nothing that yields better returns, in a long run, than habitual reverence for God.—Henry Turner Bailey.

The Church in the Life of the Community. Church work and church attendance mean the cultivation of the habit of feeling some responsibility for others.

The church is a mighty force in the community for keeping people toned up to high levels of thinking and acting.

It has kept the affairs of a Moral Governor before the attention of his people.

It has been the force behind the building of homes for orphans, unfortunates, deficient, demented, and aged. It has been the backer and often the starter of philanthropic enterprises.

The church is easy to slam and hard to replace. Kick it if you like; but you will be wiser and happier to back it.—Theodore Roosevelt.

For Discussion. 1. The viewpoints of the old men and of the young men: the good old days and the golden days to come; backward-looking regret and forward-looking hopefulness; retrospection and anticipation. "Let the optimism of our anticipation drown the pessimism of retrospection," counsels Dr. F. B. Meyer. See chapter II of Dr. Hugh Black's According to My Gospel.

2. The old men could not enter into the hopefulness and joy of the young men, and the young men probably had scant sympathy for the longing and sorrow of the old men. The young and the old should make an effort to understand and sympathize with each other.

3. Making the church a recreational center.

4. The church today must remember that there is a vast difference between a community organized and controlled by the church, and a community in which

the church is the spiritual powerhouse, keeping religion at the center of all its activities.—Professor Harry F. Ward.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why has the book of Esther puzzled scholars? 2. What is its teaching? 3. Why was it long kept out of the Sacred Canon? 4. How is it regarded by the Jews? 5. What feast do the Jews still keep in celebration of the story? 6. What is its purpose? 7. Was Mordecai right when he said that if Esther did not appeal to the king for the Jews she would perish with them? 8. What is your appraisement of Esther? 9. Ahasuerus was the Xerxes of secular history: what do you know about him? 10. Give a good definition of duty. Of privilege. 11. Are some of your duties privileges? 12. Can you regard all duties as privileges? 13. What is the reason for your being where you are just now? 14. What is the opportunity of your life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Lyman Abbot recalls riding on a train past a city where all the houses had been recently destroyed by fire. One large, fine brick building stood out from the log houses and shanties in which most of the people seemed to be living, and he asked a friend what it was. "The schoolhouse," he replied. "That, then, was saved from the fire?" "No, that has been rebuilt since." "They are laying the foundations of the new city broad and deep, and wise and well," said Dr. Abbott. "In the pioneer days of the West," said Theodore Roosevelt, "we found it an unfailing rule that after a community had existed for a certain length of time either a church was built or else the community began to go down hill."

The Jews had returned to their city Jerusalem which had been ruined by fire and neglect; they wanted to rebuild it wisely and well; what did they build first?

The Lesson Story. Pashim the potter and his friend Sotai were taking their evening meal together. Pashim and Sotai were both men of the captivity, who had returned to Jerusalem at the first proclamation of King Cyrus.

The oil lamp burned brightly, shedding a soft light upon the table, where Pashim's daughter, Susanna, waited upon her father and his guest. The morrow was to be a great day in Jerusalem. The long delays, the difficulties, the secret plots against the building of the temple were over, and all that was wanting now was the ceremony of dedication. The Passover week had been chosen for the festival, so that men from outlying districts might be present without the expense or difficulty of an extra journey to the capital.

The talk of the two men at supper was all of the morrow's ceremony, and Susanna listened eagerly. "'Tis true what the young prophet of the Lord spake unto us," said Sotai. "Aye," answered Pashim, "the promises of the Lord have been fulfilled in many ways, but which of his words meanest thou?"

"Did not Zechariah say, 'The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall finish it'? And is not the Prince to dedicate it on the morrow?"

"If it had not been for the brave and stirring words of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, I verily believe the House would not have been brought to completion," said his friend. "'Be strong, be strong, and work: fear ye not!' That has been the message of Haggai, and the visions of Zechariah have comforted many."

"'Tis a fair House, and strongly built," said Sotai; "and they tell me 'tis even larger than that of King Solomon."

"Ah! my sons," quavered the voice of an old man who had come silently up the path, and now stood in the doorway leaning upon a stick, "larger this House may be, but the glory of it cannot be compared to that of the former House."

"Come in, grandfather," cried Susanna, and she drew the old man to a seat, while Pashim and Sotai rose to show their respect. "Tell us of the ancient temple," pleaded Susanna softly.

"Where is the beautiful carving of lily work?" asked the old man, "and the Ark of God, with the golden cherubim? The Holy of Holies is empty—for our sins. The tables of stone, the pot of manna, Aaron's rod—all gone!" and he shook his head sadly. "I could well weep at the contrast, as many of us wept

when the foundation-stone was laid. Perhaps thou didst think that strange, my girl!" He laid his hand upon Susanna's head, and she smiled up at him.

"Indeed, grandfather, I did think it strange," she answered. "'Twas to be such a day of rejoicing, and yet one could scarcely hear the beautiful music and singing for the weeping and wailing."

The old man smiled. "When thou art an old woman, my child, thou wilt know that it is oft upon joyful occasions that one weeps!" He turned to Pashim. "I am glad that all our tribes are to be remembered before the Lord upon the morrow, though they be not present with us."

"In what way dost thou mean, father?" asked his son.

"By the sin offering of the twelve goats, one for each tribe. The temple is for the whole house of Israel, not for Judah and Jerusalem alone, and I am glad our High Priest remembers that it is so. And there is a wonderful Psalm to be sung tomorrow. It goeth somewhat in this fashion," and he chanted softly:

"Praise ye the Lord.
Praise God in his sanctuary.
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet.
Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and dance.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord."

—Grace Winter, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Love for God's House. In a Scottish manufacturing town a weaver who toiled at her loom from morning till night was laid up with a severe cold one rigorous winter. On her recovery the kindly old doctor said to her: "Now, you will not be very strong for a while, so take all the rest you can. I advise you to stay in bed on cold Sundays, as you have to work all the week."

"Oh, but, Doctor, I wouldn't get to the church then," she answered in a tone of concern. "Never mind that, the church will get on quite well without you and what you do for it," replied the doctor. "That may be so," said the godly woman, "but you see, I'd no get on without the church and what it does for me!"—Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.—Psalm 100.4.

If any one would tell you the surest way to happiness he must tell you to make it a rule to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you.—William Law.

I've always thought if I had my choice, an' my life could express worship, I'd choose for it to be praise.—Ruth McEnery Stuart.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast.—Holmes.

For the structure that we raise
Time is with materials filled;
Our todays and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.—Longfellow.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VI. Rebuilding the Temple.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many chapters in the Book of Esther? 2. Read the whole story. 3. What was Esther's relationship to Mordecai? (Esth. 2.15). 4. Who is the villain of the story? 5. Why did he hate Mordecai? 6. What was his plan for revenge? 7. How was his plot frustrated? 8. What feast was held to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews? 9. What can you learn about Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the story? 10. Could one imagine Ahasuerus risking his life for others? 11. What would we say instead of "Think not with thyself"? (Do not imagine.) 12. What does "holdest thy peace" mean? 13. What must Mordecai have had in mind when he said, "Then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place"? 14. What later king made a promise like that of Ahasuerus? (Mk. 6.23). 15. What good traits had Esther? 16. Are you *here* for *some purpose?*

ESTHER SAVES HER PEOPLE

Golden Text

**The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard,
And delivered them out of all their troubles. Psalm 34.17**

LESSON Book of Esther DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 20.20-28; Romans 5.6-10; 12.1,2

ESTHER 4.10 Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai, *saying:* 11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except those to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. 12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? 15 Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai, 16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

5.1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the entrance of the house. 2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. 3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be given thee even to the half of the kingdom.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

The Characters in the Drama. The Book of Esther is a drama thrillingly told in five acts. The scene is Shushan, one of the capitals of Persia. The time is in the reign of Ahasuerus, or Xerxes as he is better known, king of Persia. (Professor Sayse explains that Ahasuerus, or Akhashverosh, is the Hebrew form of the Persian Khshayarsha, called Xerxes in Greek.) The leading persons are the king, a cruel, sensuous, despotic monarch; Mordecai, an excellent Jew for the time and place, but a master at hatred and intrigue; Esther, the beautiful maiden who became the Queen of Persia, a brave, loyal Jewess who was yet vindictive and cruel; Haman, the king's chief minister, the shrewd villain of the story, haughty and unscrupulous.

Act I. Ahasuerus is on the throne. Queen Vashti is deposed because she fails to obey her lord's command to appear at his feast when all were "merry with wine." A new queen is sought. Esther, a Jewish maiden, is chosen, but does not betray her nationality. Mordecai, Esther's cousin and guardian, saves the king's life by informing Esther of a plot against the king which she makes known to Ahasuerus. Haman is promoted above all the princes, and because Mordecai the Jew fails to bow down before him he induces the king to sign a decree ordering the slaying on a certain day a year hence of all the Jews in his realm.

Act II. Mordecai learns of the decree and attracts the attention of the queen by sitting before the king's gate in sackcloth and ashes. Through Hathach, the king's chamberlain appointed to attend her, messages pass between

Mordecai and Esther, and Esther is persuaded to intercede for the Jews with the king.

The Jewish name of Esther is Hadassah, or Myrtle, Esth. 2.7. "Esther is the Assyrian Istar, the Assyro-Babylonian form of the name of the goddess Ashtoreth, who, like the classical Venus, symbolized youth and beauty; the name had evidently been given her as a nickname by her heathen neighbors because she was fair and beautiful" (Sayce). Learning through *her maidens and chamberlain* about Mordecai, Esther is *grieved* and sends clothing to him to be exchanged for his sackcloth, but he refuses it. Then she sends Hathach to him, who brings back to her Mordecai's message that the Jews are to be destroyed and his charge to her to appeal to the king in their behalf. Her answer to Mordecai is that every one here knows the invariable law that whoever enters the king's *inner court* unsummoned is *put to death* unless the king holds out his *golden scepter*, a long rod that was the symbol of his power. Esther adds that she is not in the king's favor just now; it is thirty days since the king has summoned her to his presence.

Ahasuerus on His Throne. (From a Stone Found in the Ruins of His Palace)

Do not imagine, Mordecai returns answer, that thou shalt escape. Thou fearest the danger of going to the king, but thou mayest equally well fear the danger of not going. If thou keepest silent, if thou dost not take thy life in thy hands and risk the king's anger, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place (see ¶ 3, page 288), *but thou and thy father's house will perish.* This sounds like a threat which was not true, since the fact is repeatedly stated in the book that Esther was not known to be a Jewess; could she not therefore confidently count upon escape from a general massacre of the Jews? On the other hand, that the king was very cruel and his anger was easily aroused was well known. We take away from Esther all the credit for courage and self-sacrifice if she believed she must perish if she did not approach the king, while there was a chance for herself as well as the rest if she did brave the lion in his den. *And who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this,* Mordecai concludes his argument. Thou art evidently the agent through whom God would work.

There are many Jews in Shushan (we infer this from the number of men whom they slew when authorized to resist their enemies, 9.15) and Esther calls for their help. She bids Mordecai gather them together and *fast* for her *three days.* She and her maidens will also fast, and then she will go to the king. *And if I perish, I perish,* thus she ends her message to Mordecai. Was this an expression of perfect submission to the will of God, or was it a cry of despairing resignation to the inevitable? Mordecai departs to carry out Esther's orders.

The fast lasts perhaps forty hours or more, from the afternoon of the day messages were exchanged between Mordecai and Esther till the morning of the third day. Now Esther arrays herself in her *royal apparel* and enters the inner court of the Throne-Hall. Through the doorway the king beholds her, and *she finds favor in his sight.* He holds out his scepter and when she approaches near him inquires what she wishes, promising to grant it *even to the half of the kingdom.* Compare Herod's promise to Herodias.

Act III. Esther requests the king and Haman to come to a banquet which she has prepared for them. Haman is greatly pleased with the honor, but the pleasure of the banquet is embittered by the sight of Mordecai at the king's gate who fails to bow or move for him. At the counsel of Zeresh, his wife, he has a gallows prepared for Mordecai. That night the king cannot sleep and has the state records read to him. There he is reminded of Mordecai's favor. When Haman comes the next day intending to ask the king to order Mordecai hanged, he is asked what shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor. Thinking the king means himself, Haman advises a triumphal procession through the city, and learns that the honor is for the hated Mordecai. He carries out the king's order. At the second day's banquet Esther

informs the king of Haman's plot, and the king orders Haman hanged on the gallows Haman had prepared for Mordecai. In response to Esther's petition for her people he authorizes the Jews to resist their enemies when his earlier decree ordering their slaughter is executed.

Act IV. The appointed day arrives. The Jews are victorious, slaying seventy-five thousand of their enemies. The king tells Esther the number that are slain in the capital; she petitions for a second slaughter there the day following, and the hanging of Haman's ten sons. The king has her wish executed.

Act V. Mordecai, who is next unto the king in power, sends letters to the Jews far and near enjoining the keeping and perpetuating of the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the month Adar as days of rejoicing. And these days are called Purim, after the name of Pur, because Haman had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to destroy them.

Traditional Tomb of Mordecai and Esther

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Vashti the queen, 1.12-17. Some years ago three Americans were riding through the Persian mountains, on the road that was once the highway from Shushan to Ecbatana. They passed a woman walking with a heavy load of household goods on her back. Her baby was in her arms, and she was leading a cow. Behind came a man, a handsome mountain Kurd, with no burden but his gun. The missionary in the party spoke to him: "Why don't you help that woman?" The man looked as if he had been asked to carry the cow, and answered, "What! She's my woman!" This is the Persian attitude toward women now, as it was in Esther's time. This was Ahasuerus's attitude toward Vashti.—Emma Bailey Speer.

There is one law for him that he be put to death, 4.11. That Ahasuerus (Xerxes) would not hesitate to carry out such a law is shown by his having had all the engineers beheaded (and the sea scourged) when a storm wrecked the bridge of boats which they had built across the Hellespont over which he would march his troops in his campaign against Greece; and by his having the eldest son of his friend Pythias killed and his body cut in two that the army might pass between the two parts, because he was enraged by the father's request that this son might remain at home—that father who had already given five sons to the army! Though weak and cowardly, Xerxes was a capricious and cruel despot.

So Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre, 4.52. An illustration drawn from the custom that now prevails in connection with an audience with the Pope of Rome is not exactly one "from Oriental Life," but it is interesting here. When one wishes such an audience, he is asked by the master of ceremonies if he understands "the etiquette of the occasion," meaning by this that "the women must go veiled and the whole company must kneel when the Pope enters his audience-chamber, and if he is gracious enough to present his signet they must kiss it."

Esther the queen, 5.2. Critics ask what room there can be for either Vashti or Esther, since Xerxes had but one wife, Amestris, to whom he was married before the third year of his reign, and who continued to be his wife until the end of it. The answer is simple. Amestris, it is true, was his only legitimate wife, but, like his predecessors and successors, he must have had others as well who were illegitimate. Of those we know nothing from Greek sources; from the Book of Esther we know of two.—A. H. Sayce.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Time of the Story of Esther. An interval of sixty years intervened between the events of chapters six and seven of the Book of Ezra, and to that time we may assign the events of the Book of Esther. Ezra shows how God did great things for his people who returned to Jerusalem from the exile: in Esther we may see how he cared for those who remained in the land of the Captivity.

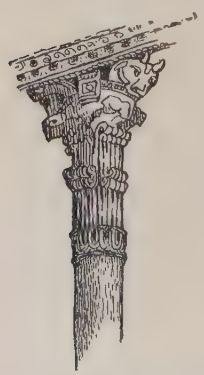
Zerubbabel's temple was completed in 515 B. C. in the reign of Darius king of Persia. Thirty years later Xerxes, the son of Darius, ascended the throne. He reigned for twenty years (B. C. 485-465) over an empire that extended from India to Ethiopia, and included twelve satrapies or provinces. Xerxes is famous in history for his invasion of Greece. It was this king, it is believed, who is called Ahaseurus in the Book of Esther.

The Book of Esther. This is the most neglected, perhaps, of all the books of the Bible by Christians, but the most popular of them all among the Jews.

There are various reasons why the book has always puzzled scholars. There are troublesome questions connected with the history: (notably that Mordecai is one of the exiles deported with Jehoiachin in 597 B. C. and it is now 485-464 B. C.); there is no mention of God nor any direct reference to him in the book; there is no reference to the Law, the past history of the Israelites, the temple, sacrifice, nor worship, nor is any part of the book pervaded by a religious spirit; there is no great moral lesson taught; the ethical standard is low—the cruelty and treachery of Haman are condemned by implication, it is true, but the equal cruelty of Mordecai and Esther are loudly acclaimed; the spirit of pride and vengeance and hatred and exclusiveness pervades the whole. The book is patriotic, not religious: the advancement of the Jews' cause, not of Jehovah's, is the leading thought throughout. Said Luther: "I am so hostile to this book (Second Book of Maccabees) and that of Esther, that I wish they did not exist; they are too Judaising, and contain many heathenish improprieties."

The book certainly served the purpose of keeping alive the patriotic enthusiasm of the Jews through long ages of oppression, and this seems to have been its primary object. Though the name of God is not mentioned, the faith of Mordecai and Esther in him who overrules events and cares for his people is easily seen. The story tells of human players and their plots, and also shows the Divine Player who controls the plots. "Then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place," 4.14, is an evident paraphrase for "Then will the Lord send relief and deliverance through some one else."

Dr. Lewis B. Paton offers this interesting explanation of the avoidance of the name of God: "Esther was meant to be read at the annual merrymaking of Purim, for which the Mishna lays down the rule that people are to drink until they are unable to distinguish between 'Blessed be Mordecai!' and 'Cursed be Haman!' On such occasions the name of God might be profaned, if it occurred in the reading, and, therefore, it was deemed best to omit it altogether."



A Pillar from the Ruins of the Palace of Ahasuerus

The book takes its name from that of the heroine, but gives no clue as to its writer. That it was written later than the events recorded the opening words show.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of our lesson is Shushan, or Susa. French explorers have excavated the mounds upon the site, and have uncovered "Shushan the palace." Professor Price, in The Monuments of the Old Testament, quotes M. Dieulafoy's description of the palace. It was composed of three groups of distinct apartments, each surrounded by a special enclosure, but comprised in the same fortress. The Apadana, or throne-hall, resembled a Greek temple. The king occupied in the temple the place of the divine statue. The hall covered more than twenty acres. Quite separate from the Apadana, grouping themselves about an interior court, were the special apartments of the sovereign: the audience hall, the rest-chamber, rooms similar to a chancery and to an armory, for the guards and for the king's subsidiaries. The private dwelling of the

king, recognized by its arrangements and isolation, and by the formidable turret which protected it, occupied the southeast angle of the acropolis.

At Ecbanta (modern Hamadan) the traditional tomb of Esther and Mordecai is held in honor by the Jews.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Remember that "apperception is the coalescence of a new idea with an old one, both being thereby modified," and that whatever you teach on Sunday will become effective on Monday only in so far as it has been organically unified with what was known on Saturday. That is to say, the more associations you can make between Sunday lessons and weekday lessons and experiences, the better.

Many a pupil never sees any relation between his religious and his secular teaching. In the Roman Catholic schools pupils find pictures of the saints and martyrs of the church on their maps. In their history lessons, the great events of church development are linked with the march of events on the chart. Whenever possible connect in your pupils' minds that which they have learned in the day school with events recorded in the lesson from the Bible. Today, for example, let them tell what they know about Xerxes (Ahasuerus) and his invasion of Greece. If your pupils have not yet studied about Xerxes at school, copy for one of them (or lend him your book) the account given on page 289 that he may come prepared to tell it. Or send him to the volume on Persia in The Story of the Nations' Series.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
SACRIFICIAL SERVICE—BOOK OF ESTHER

Beginning the Lesson. Patriotism is more in evidence than religion in the Book of Esther. To turn to it after the fervors of prophets and the continual recognition of God in history which marks the other historical books, is like coming down from heaven to earth, as Ewald says. But that difference in tone probably accurately represents the difference between the saints and heroes of an earlier age and the Jews in Persia, in whom national feeling was stronger than devotion. The picture of their characteristics deducible from this book shows many of the traits which have marked them ever since—accommodating flexibility, strangely united with unbounding tenacity; a capacity for securing the favor of influential people, and willingness to stretch conscience in securing it; reticence and diplomacy; and, beneath all, unquenchable devotion to Israel, which burns alike in the politic Mordecai and the lovely Esther.—Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

Celebrating the Deliverance of the Jews. A most joyous occasion for modern Jews is the Feast of Purim, which they celebrate on the fourteenth of Adar, the last month of the Jewish year, which corresponds to February-March. At this feast presents are given to one another as we give them at Christmas time, and all kinds of merriment are enjoyed. The day before is a fast day, the "Fast of Esther," when the Jewish women are very busy preparing choice dishes and cakes for the feast, among them one that has the name of Haman. The poor are remembered with money, and contributions are given for the Halukah, the "Box for Palestine." In the evening of the Fast-Day a service is held in the synagogues, the one occasion at which the women and children are admitted with the men into the congregation. The Sunday-School Journal quotes this account of the service from the Jewish Monthly Intelligencer: "After the usual service the minister offers three benedictions. The first for the command to read the Megilah (the parchment containing the Book of Esther), the second for the miraculous intervention which God manifested in those days to their fathers, the third for the preservation of the Jews to the present time. Then the Megilah is unrolled and spread out as a letter and read before the people in an intoning voice, different from that in which the law and the prophets are read. When the reader utters the word 'Haman,' the people all call out 'Yimach Shemo' (Let his name be blotted out, or The name of the wicked shall rot), or 'Arur Haman' (Cursed be Haman), and then they repeat this curse, naming the wife of Haman (Zeres) and his ten sons. At this time they beat on the benches or book boards in front of them, or stamp with their

feet. But when the name of Mordecai or Esther is uttered, they shout 'Barak Mordecai, barak Esther' (Blessed be Mordecai, blessed be Esther), 'Berakim Kol Israel' (Blessed be all Israel!)."

It was a great deliverance, that of the Jews in Shushan from the death planned by Haman, and Mordecai and Esther instituted the great Feast of Purim to celebrate it. They called these days Purim, after the name of Pur, because Haman had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to determine which day would be the most favorable for carrying out his purpose of destroying the Jews (Esther 3.7; 9.24,26). Who was Haman, and why did he plan to destroy the Jews? (Text Explained).

Learn to See the Privilege in the Duty. Duty has been defined as something unpleasant which the other fellow ought to do. Our lesson gives us an exactly opposite definition: Duty is something which we cannot afford to let the other fellow do. "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time," Mordecai warned Esther, "then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place." The opportunity of carrying out the duty was Esther's; she might fail to seize it, and it would fall to another. The duty was a privilege which she could grasp or let go. Thus it has always been with God's workers. We think certain people indispensable to the progress of his kingdom, but if they fall out by the way others are called to take their places. God is not dependent on any one to further his designs. By refusing to do his part no one blocks the plans of God: he only loses for himself the blessing of sharing in the work. Duty is not a burden which we would gladly shift to other shoulders; it is a privilege that we cannot afford to pass on.

Esthers are Needed Today. If Esther, in the dim light of her time, amid the demoralizing surroundings of the palace of a sensual king, could say, "If I perish, I perish!" when the saving of her race in captivity was concerned, what ought not the women of today, who live in a Christian land, in the light of him who was the Friend and the Uplifter of women, to dare to do for him? The example of Esther is well worth studying by the women of our churches who live comfortable, sheltered lives, who are dainty, refined, fastidious, and who avert their gaze from the sight and turn from the thought of things distasteful in the social order, shrinking away from men, women, and children, the sight and the knowledge of whom might haunt them and spoil their pleasure in their luxury. Esthers are needed who will be prepared to say: "It shall be my mission to save the fallen, the drunkards, the victims of the sweat-shop and the slums. I will bring into their lives the light and the love that have come to me, and will lift them up by the power which my favored position gives me."—Editor of Christian World Pulpit.

Opportunities. Many persons who would like to live upright, useful and God-fearing lives feel that they have had no opportunity to do so. They complain to themselves that they are so handicapped by inherited weaknesses, so fettered by grim necessity or circumstances, that they have no chance to broaden their lives into the ideal manhood or womanhood.

The thoughtful man discovers here some misconception as to the true nature of an opportunity. Life may be likened to a football game; its opportunities are the openings, the gaps in the line of opposition, through which we may plunge for a great gain or a touchdown. But in a truer sense, an opportunity consists not in freedom from restraint but in the very restraint itself. In the limitations and obstacles that oppress him, a man finds his chance to show the mettle of his soul. They are the challengers that rouse the Christ spirit lying within him, that dare it to come forth and wrestle with them. Were it not for them the Christ spirit might have no occasion to bestir itself and show its power.

Here is a little fourteen-year-old girl. She has spent the last nine years of her life in a wheel chair, a helpless cripple. You might well ask, What opportunity has she for a life of cheer and contentment and usefulness? But were you to watch her in her father's house, you would see strange things. Each morning she wheels herself into the dining room to set the table, into the kitchen to make the coffee, back and forth across the parlor floor pushing a carpet sweeper, or up to the piano to play a lively tune or sing a song: the happiest, brightest, most helpful little girl you could ever wish to see.

Fate, like a cruel giant, trod upon her and left her broken.

"There, now," said Fate, "there you are. What can you make of yourself now?"

"Thank you for the opportunity," replied her indomitable spirit. "I will show you what I can make of myself."

The chief task of life is not to be great, but to bring out into the light the hidden Christlikeness of our natures, the patience and cheer, the hope and courage, the determination and gentleness of which every soul is capable. And in this task the very hindrances to our Christlikeness are the truest opportunities for its cultivation.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Modern ways in which life is made hard for the Jews.

2. "O Prudence, how many have crept away into nameless graves, while here or there one or two have forgotten themselves into immortality!"

3. "Does it require great courage for any woman to carry a mighty matter to the *inner court* of any man's life?"

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How great a gap in time is there between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra? 2. Who is the leader of the first part? 3. Who is the leader of the second part? 4. Who wrote the Book of Ezra? 5. What lessons can we learn from Ezra the man? 6. Ezra lived in the time of Herodotus, Socrates, and Pericles: what do you know about these great men? 7. How many years between the dedication of the temple and the coming of Ezra and his company? 8. What does the fifth chapter of Nehemiah tell us about the conditions at this time in Judea? 9. Was Ezra right in trusting to God without an armed escort? 10. How do Christians today dishonor their religion before non-Christians? 11. What are some of the things which we claim our religion will do for us? 12. Do we live up to our assertions when a test comes in regard to our trust in God? 13. Should we trust to God for our welfare and not take precautions against dangers? 14. What principle is involved in the matter? 15. Why did Ezra hold the keepers of the treasure to a strict account therefor? 16. Should one today who administers funds for religious purposes be held to an account for them?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW ESTHER SAVED HER PEOPLE—BOOK OF ESTHER

Beginning the Lesson. Recall the expeditions to Greece made by Darius, King of Persia, which ended so badly for him. The great king was getting a third expedition ready when he died. His son Xerxes would have preferred not to continue the struggle, but he was a weak and vain king, who yielded to the urging of his courtiers. Eight years were spent in gathering the greatest army the world had ever seen, equipping the men with arms and provisions, and building roads over which they could travel. There were over two million fighting men and with them went so many slaves and servants that some historians say there were ten millions in all. Imagine this vast host marching across Asia Minor in several divisions and meeting at the Hellespont. Here two bridges had been built, but before the army could cross a storm came up and destroyed them. The angry king ordered the men who planned the bridges put to death, and then he had the waves lashed with whips, and chains thrown across the strait in token that he intended to become the master of the rebellious sea! Other bridges were built, and before the army crossed Xerxes reviewed them from a neighboring height. "See that mighty host spread out as far as eye can reach!" he exclaimed. "I weep at the thought that a hundred years hence there will be nothing left of it except, perhaps, a handful of dust and a few moldering bones!"

Seven days and nights it took for the mighty host to cross the bridge. There were "the sacred chariot drawn by eight white horses, the glittering array of the Immortals (the king's body-guard of picked soldiers, who were called the Immortals because they had never suffered defeat), the burnished helmets and arms of the foot-soldiers, the silken canopies and tents over the grandees, and countless chariots drawn by four horses, and provided on either side with sharp scythes, which were intended to mow down the enemy like ripe grain." In the baggage wagons, of which there were so many that it took a whole month to get them all over, there were costly hangings for the officers' tents, soft couches, even dishes of solid gold.

In Thessaly between the mountains and the sea there is a narrow pass through which Xerxes and his army had to go in order to enter Greece. It was called

Thermopylæ, a Greek word that means "Hot Gateway," because of the warm springs there. This pass Xerxes found guarded by a few men under the leadership of Leonidas, a Spartan king, and he sent them word to surrender their arms. Great was his surprise when the brave Greeks answered, "Come and take them!" and still greater was his surprise when he found that with all his mighty host he could not do this! His soldiers, even his Immortals, retreated before the little handful of brave Greeks. If a Greek shepherd had not turned traitor to his country and shown Xerxes a way over the mountains, he would have had to return at once to Persia. The Persians marched on to Athens and burned the city, which had been deserted by the Athenians. Then Xerxes had a throne built upon a mountain and sat there in state to watch the naval battle between his fleet and that of the Greeks. To his great surprise the Greeks were victorious in this battle of Salamis. The discouraged king returned to Persia, leaving his general to conquer Greece. Two more naval battles were fought, at Platæa and at Mycale, in which the Grecks were victorious as before, and it was a very small Persian army that escaped, leaving behind their slaves and all their baggage.

All this story you will read when you study Grecian history. In the Bible there is a short book which gives glimpses of the life of Xerxes after his return to his capital city of Shushan, Persia, and about his dealings with the Jews who lived there. The book is named for the heroine. What was her name? Who was she? In this book what is the name of the king of Persia? Ahasuerus is another name for Xerxes, the king who failed to conquer Greece.

Heroism is Compounded of Character and Opportunity. The girl who will teach herself courage need not go to any special school of heroism; she must simply instruct herself in obedience and unselfishness.

There are classes in these two subjects in every farmhouse and village store and factory and library in the land. Every time the daughter of the house gets up early in the morning, in spite of the lazy wish for a little more sleep, she takes a lesson in her chosen subject.

An afternoon spent in listening to the woes of a dull, deaf neighbor or in soothing a fretful child helps form the habit which may issue in a glorious deed. The persistent study of difficult shorthand may toughen the moral fibre so that by and by it can withstand the strain of temptation.

All is grist that comes to the mill of character, and heroism is compounded only of character and opportunity. Occasion may seem to be accidental. Whether or not a certain girl is at a certain corner at a certain moment may determine whether she can save a baby from death under the wheels of an automobile; but a hundred chances may come to her in vain if she is not fitted to snatch them. Condensed from an article in The Youth's Companion by Heloise E. Hershey.

Captain Mahon, in his Life of Nelson, says that the motive which actuated Nelson was always duty, not ease; honor, not gain; the ideal, not the material. "Do your duty" was his great message to England. An English paper records the following incident:

It was at a moving-picture entertainment. The small, grey head of Nelson moved upwards over the screen. No sooner was Nelson settled upon the screen than there began to push their way over the edges detached letters of the alphabet, sideways and upside down, twisting and turning, edging one another out of place, gyrating round the head of Nelson. The audience began to titter; even while they were laughing a co-ordinating impulse seemed to direct those whirling letters of the alphabet. They slipped to their places; suddenly all had fallen into order, and the words stood motionless, halved around the brow of Nelson: "England expects that every man will do his duty." Silence fell. Not often at a casual entertainment does the vision of the perfected whole follow so quickly the riddle of the apparently purposeless parts.

No Sacrifice too Great. "No sacrifice is too great for the right." This was the substance of a speech by General Wood. There are some things worth dying for, and one of them is the thing that is right. The right will win only as men and women make great sacrifices.

When Governor Hughes was the head of New York State, several bills were presented to the legislature of that state to prevent gambling at race-tracks. Every vote was needed at the Senate when the bill came up. Senator Foelker of Brooklyn was very sick at the time. His vote was sorely needed to pass the

bill. He got up from his sick-bed, and entered the senate chamber supported by the arms of his physician and a friend. He nearly collapsed during the debate. At the risk of his life he had come, and he stayed until he answered "Aye" to his name at the roll-call, and the day was won. A newspaper said the next day: "That is the kind of conduct for which they give the Victoria Cross on the field of battle." When they tried to praise him afterward he said, "I did my duty, that's all." In these days of peace we have need of just such heroism and patriotism.—The Wellspring.

"Queen Esther Circles." In many churches of our land there are groups of young girls who call themselves "Queen Esther Circles." Why? In what respects do they seek to follow in her footsteps? "Tact, courage and womanly self-sacrifice are the cardinal principles of this society, and its members make it a point to step fearlessly into the gap, whatever the emergency that arises."

Opportunities. We are all tempted to say, If I only were Esther! If I only had a great opportunity, would I not rise to it! Would I not speak out at any risk! Would I not do a work, and win a name, and deliver Israel, and glorify God! Did you ever read of Eugenia and her imaginary piety? Eugenia is a young lady of the most devout disposition. She is more scandalized than she can tell you at the way some of her school-fellows have married heathens, and at the life they lead without God's worship in their new homes. But, Eugenia, you may never be married so as to show married people how to live. At the same time, you have a maid. She dresses you for church, and then you leave her to have as little religion as a Hottentot. You turn her away when she displeases you, and you hire another, and so on, till you will die and your circle will be dissolved and your opportunity forever lost. Your maid, and her sister, and her widowed mother, and her ill-doing brother, and her lover, all are your circle at present, and your opportunity is fast flitting by; and, because it is so near you every day, you do not discover it. Eugenia, full to the eyes of so many vain imaginings!—Dr. Alexander Whyte, in Bible Characters.

For This Cause Came I into the World. Dr. Gunsaulus was one day writing a sermon on the text, "For this cause came I into the world." His nephew stood by. "What do you think I was born for?" he asked. "Heaven knows: I don't," replied his uncle. "No more do I," responded the youth.

A few days later occurred the terrible fire in the Chicago theater. The young man chanced to be passing by. He plunged in again and again, and succeeded in dragging out seventeen into safety. Once more he rushed in, but this time a piece of timber felled him. As he lay dying in the hospital he murmured to his uncle, "For this cause came I into the world that I might save seventeen!"

A few months later Dr. Gunsaulus was in Rome when a man rushed up to him and wildly exclaimed, "I saved myself!" "I hope that man did not annoy you," said his attendant afterward. "He lost his reason in the Chicago fire. He cries continually, 'I saved myself.'" The man had trampled down others in his efforts to save himself, and the realization of what he had done had deprived him of his reason.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VII. A Brave Queen.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibility of not doing it.—Dr. J. R. Miller.

Heroism is the soul's high privilege, and the ranks of those who wear it nobly are always bigger than we know.—The Youth's Companion.

Life without a mission is life with a tremendous omission.—H. C. Trumbull.

It is a glorious thought that each one of us is come to the kingdom for such a time as this, to do some work for the King.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who is the leader in the first part of the Book of Ezra? 2. Who in the second part? 3. Who was Ezra? 4. Why did Ezra want to go to Jerusalem? 5. How did Ezra prove his great faith in God? 6. Why was it right for Ezra to go on so long and dangerous a journey without an armed escort, and right for Nehemiah (Neh. 2.9) to have one? 7. What would the heathen king have thought of Ezra's religion if he had not practiced what he preached? 8. How many times do the words of our Golden Text, or words similar thereto, occur in the seventh and eighth chapters of Ezra?

THE SECOND RETURN FROM EXILE

Golden Text

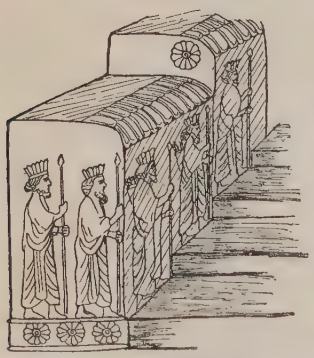
The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good. Ezra 8.22

LESSON Ezra 7.1 to 8.36 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 107.1-9
REFERENCE MATERIAL Ezra 9.1 to 10.17

EZRA 7.10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.
8.21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the war, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.
31 Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lier-in-wait by the way. 32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. EZRA'S GREAT DESIRE, 7.10-28. Ezra, a learned priest and scribe among the exiles in Babylon, had set his heart upon knowing and obeying *the law of Jehovah,* and upon teaching it to his fellow countrymen in Jerusalem. He sought permission of Artaxerxes the Persian king to lead a large company of exiles back to Jerusalem. Artaxerxes not only granted his request, but also gave him much gold and silver for the temple and also a letter in which he directed his officers in Judea to do whatsoever Ezra might ask. *Blessed be Jehovah, the God of our fathers,* exclaimed Ezra, *who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of Jehovah: and hath extended lovingkindness unto me.*


Stairway of the Persian Palace

II. A LIST OF THOSE WHO WENT WITH EZRA, 8.1-14. "It is interesting to notice names that had occurred in the earlier lists of the followers of Zerubbabel, showing that some of the descendants of those who refused to go on the first expedition took part in the second. They remind us of Christiana and her children, who would not join the Pilgrim when he set out from the City of Destruction, but who subsequently followed in his footsteps. But there was little at Jerusalem to attract a new expedition, for the glamor which had surrounded the first return, with a son of David at its head, had faded in grievous disappointment; and the second series of pilgrims had to carry with them the torch with which to rekindle the flames of devotion" (Adeney).

III. AT THE RIVER AHAVA, 8.15-23. Ezra and his company encamped for three days at the river Ahava. On reviewing his followers Ezra discovered the absence of Levites for the temple service, upon whom he was depending for the work of teaching in Israel the *statutes and ordinances.* "The Levites were those who before Josiah's reformation had served as priests at the high places, and for this reason Ezekiel's program assigned to them a distinctly sub-

ordinate place in the reconstructed church (Ezek. 44.10-13). Naturally, then, the prospect of return had little attraction for them, and that accounts for their complete absence from Ezra's company." Ezra sent to Casiphia, where there must have been a Jewish colony, and about forty Levites and two hundred and twenty Nethinim, or temple servants, were secured. Then he proclaimed a fast by the river, and all humbled themselves before God. "Happy are they who have the grace to walk in the valley of humiliation, for this leads to the armory of supernatural power" (Adeney). Ezra prayed for *a straight way*, a directed way, a way free from difficulties. Nehemiah later (Neh. 2.9) took with him a strong guard for the same journey, but Ezra thought he could not do this without showing a lack of faith in God, of whose protecting care he had said so much to the king. We shall be in God's hands, he had said. *His power and his wrath are against all them that forsake him*, he had furthermore said, and to trust in the king's escort of soldiers rather than in God seemed to Ezra a forsaking of God. *So we fasted and besought our God* for help on the way, wrote Ezra and as he looked backward after the journey was made he could add *he was entreated of us*, he had guided and kept them.

Persian Soldiers

IV. THE GIFTS FOR THE TEMPLE AND THEIR CUSTODIANS, 8.24-30. The treasure of gold and silver and sacred vessels which the king and counsellors and the Israelites had given for the temple, worth several millions (a silver talent was worth $1,875; a gold talent $33,750; a daric, a gold coin of Persia, $5, according to Hasting's Dictionary), Ezra had weighed and counted and given into the charge of twelve priests and ten Levites, making them responsible for their safe-keeping until the treasure could be again weighed and counted before witnesses in *the chamber of the house of Jehovah*, the storerooms around the outer walls of the outer court of the temple.

V. THE JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL, 8.31,32. They left the river Ahava on the twelfth of Nisan, our April, and they arrived safely in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, our August (Ezra 7.8).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

To help us against the enemy in the way, verse 22. Although Ezra's company was a large one, wandering Bedouins, wild men of the desert, might attack and plunder, if not kill, the rear column. No caravan today, however large, would think of carrying on that journey such an amount of gold and silver without an armed guard.

Fine bright brass, precious as gold, verse 27. Whether brass, the alloy of copper and zinc, was known to the Persians is doubtful. Utensils of bronze, the alloy of copper and tin, and of copper, were in use.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the leader of the first company of returning exiles? In what year did they reach Jerusalem? What conditions did they find in Judea? What sort of life were the Jews leading who remained in Babylon? Ezra was very careful about Jehovah's reputation in Babylon: how had Daniel shown a similar care?

Between the Dedication of the Temple and the Coming of Ezra from Babylon. The first company of Jews under Zerubbabel went from the Land of Exile to Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, 538 B.C. The curtain of history falls in Judea after the second temple was dedicated in 516 B.C., in the sixth year of Darius king of Persia. It does not rise again until the arrival of Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in 458 B.C. The fifty-eight years or more which are passed over in silence were years of

struggle and disappointment for the colony. The burst of enthusiasm for the temple and its worship which the prophets Haggai and Zechariah inspired died away, the temple was poorly furnished and its services poorly kept up, the walls of Jerusalem were still unfinished, and the people were disillusioned and demoralized, and had even intermarried with the heathen nations around them. Zerubbabel, if Jewish tradition is correct, returned to Babylon to die, and no leader arose to take his place.

Meanwhile the Persians had invaded Greece and the famous battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Platæa had decided their fate in Europe. The revolt of Egypt in the reign of Darius (487 B. C.) and again in that of Artaxerxes (462-456 B. C.) brought the Persian army through Syria, and it is probable that the people of Judea were called upon for supplies and even for service.

Ezra the Scribe. Ezra was a priest and a scribe, "the most conspicuous of that order of men which now first came into prominence and was destined afterwards to play so fatal a part in the religious history of Judaism. The scribes, or *sopherim,* had in some form long existed. They had originally been the registrars or clerks by whom the people or the army were numbered. They then rose into higher importance as royal secretaries. Then, as the Prophetic Writings took a more literary form, and the calamities of the falling Monarchy and the subsequent exile stimulated the nation to collect and register the fragments of the past, they took a conspicuous place by the side of the prophets. Such a one in the earlier generation had been Baruch, the friend of Jeremiah. Such a one now was Ezra in the Jewish schools of Chaldean learning."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The river Ahava, by which Ezra reviewed his company, must have been one of the tributaries or canals of the Euphrates, not very far from Babylon.

"As the crow flies" the distance across the desert between Babylon and Jerusalem was about five hundred miles, but by the caravan route around the desert it was at least nine hundred miles, and the journey, on foot by the greater number, would require the three months and a half spent. All that Ezra tells about the journey are the words: "We came to Jerusalem."

Professor George Rawlinson writes that "The course of the traveller must be up the stream of the Euphrates, either on one side of it or the other. The left or eastern bank of the river is that usually preferred, since the country to the west of the Euphrates is for some distance marshy, and in wet season impassable, while the whole tract is more exposed than the left bank to the attacks of the predatory Arab tribes, who roam freely over the great desert which intervenes between Mesopotamia and Palestine. Ezra, with his caravan of six thousand Israelites, probably quitted Babylon by the north gate—the gate of Nineveh—and proceeded northwestward along the river-course from the site of Babylon to that of Is or Hit, a distance of one hundred and forty miles. This he would accomplish in the space of nine days, without much trouble or fatigue. His way lay through cultivated districts, in a part of the empire which was well watched and guarded, perhaps along a "Royal Road," though not the Royal Road which is described by Herodotus. The caravan under his charge carried tents (Ezra 8.15), which were pitched at the end of each day's journey, and sufficiently protected the travellers from the heavy night dews, and from any possible storms or other changes in the weather. It was accompanied, no doubt, by a considerable number of baggage animals—asses, camels, mules, and perhaps horses."

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Although Ezra relied upon God for his safety on the way, he, nevertheless, prepared carefully for the journey, and exercised great precaution in regard to the valuable offerings for the Temple which he was carrying to Jerusalem. It has been said of Dr. Joseph Parker, of London, that he labored for the sermon he was to deliver as if he had no God to help him, and then preached in reliance upon God as if he had made no preparation. Could a teacher follow a better example than that of these two men?

Observe Ezra's method of procedure: he first learned and then taught. "He sought the law of the Lord and so laid up a good treasure, and then instructed

others and laid out what he had laid up. He also first did and then taught, practiced the commandments and then directed others in the practice of them; thus his example confirmed his doctrine."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: THE HOPE OF THE NATION

Beginning the Lesson. Ezra belonged to a priestly family. He is sometimes called Ezra the Priest, but more often Ezra the Scribe. At first the word *scribe* meant a town recorder. Under the later kings of Judah a scribe was a royal secretary and the custodian of state papers. But after the exile the word *scribe* meant a man who was engaged in copying, studying and interpreting the laws. Baruch was the scribe of Jeremiah: he wrote down the words that Jeremiah dictated. Ezra was the founder and the type of the new order of scribes who did not receive new revelations of God's will, but who explained and applied the revelations already given.

Ezra was "a ready scribe"—a skilful scribe, we are told in the sixth verse of the seventh chapter—but he was not like the later scribes of Christ's time, who were learned in the letter of the law but were strangers to its spirit. To know and to do the law were the first steps in Ezra's program; the third step was to teach it to others. His desire to see the law more strictly observed by his countrymen who had returned to Judea was the primary motive which led him to undertake his mission there. Secondary motives were the beautifying of the temple (7.19,20) and the establishment of civil order (7.25), but his main object was the teaching and enforcement of the law. Text Explained.

How Shall you Invest your Life? The investment of life is a matter that presents itself with peculiar and compelling emphasis to young men and young women who stand at the hour of life decision. At a time when our world is so palpably in the remaking; when the downward pull of commercialism and of greed is so appalling; and when the need and value of forces that lift and build up is so great, our hope and our appeal is that our young people shall see the true meaning and the larger values of life, and shall make their investment accordingly. The supreme values of the kingdom of God; the higher and richer returns of the life invested in service; the surer and truer success of the life that is dedicated to the upbuilding and the betterment of the world, these are the higher calls to the mind and heart of youth—these are the supreme values which when understood will captivate and command the allegiance of the young Christian so that he shall scorn to throw his life away upon lesser and meaner aims.

Among the fields of largest investment and the calls to greatest service today is that of the Christian ministry—the call to preach the gospel. The office of the Christian ministry has never been more challenging. The sheer bigness of the task of the Church, the transforming power of the gospel in the individual and in all the activities of society, was never more apparent to discerning minds.

But even aside from the more obvious results of his work, the preacher and prophet of the gospel of Christ is among the most dynamic and constructive leaders of our modern world. He is making for its truer and its larger life. He is guide to those who are in darkness and a bulwark to those who are in moral confusion and uncertainty, and as such his influence is incalculable in our civilization. His value as an enheartener of the discouraged, as a stabilizer of the moral forces of the community and of the nation, means far more to our civilization than the unthinking ordinarily realize.

Thousands of pulpits are vacant today, and thousands of other pulpits are occupied by men who can fill them but inadequately. There is no need of the Church or of our civilization more urgent at the present hour than this, that the strongest and most gifted young men of our day shall respond to the call of God and shall invest their lives in the work of the Christian ministry.

Preaching as we know it from our churches and from pulpits is only one way of preaching. Preaching in its broader sense may not be distinguished from teaching the gospel. The form of presentation is incidental. The great commission to the Church of Christ is to teach—that is, so to bring the gospel into relation with the minds and hearts of men that they may see it and may yield themselves to it—may live it.

In this sense the medical missionary is a preacher and a teacher of the gospel.

He is this both in his living ministry to the bodies of men by which he expresses the very spirit of his Master, and also by such words of instruction and exhortation as he may find the opportunity to utter, and by which he seeks to inform the mind and comfort the hearts of men.

The same thing is true of the missionary teacher who in the mission school may instruct in English or mathematics or some other subject, but who first of all is a teacher of Christ. So we think, and rightly think, of all our missionaries, medical, educational, industrial, literary and evangelistic. They are above all else preachers and teachers of the gospel. They are successors of the apostles and of the missionaries of the last nineteen hundred years. They are the builders of the kingdom of God. They have invested their lives for the things which are most worth living for and most worth dying for.

But here, again, in missionary work the need for laborers is far greater than the response to the call. With the cry of human need in every land ringing in our ears, and with practically the entire world open to the gospel and asking for more missionaries, more doctors, more teachers, more evangelists—more strong, well-equipped men and women to lead the Christian forces in non-Christian lands—and with all of the mission boards sounding the call for recruits, the supply is vastly below the urgent demand. The great churches which are enlarging their missionary programs in view of the world-wide opportunity of today are saying very frankly that this enlarged program cannot be carried out unless young men and young women shall offer themselves by the thousands for investment in these fields of incalculable returns. To this situation we ask our young people to give most careful and prayerful attention before deciding their life work. Here is an unsurpassed opportunity for those whom God needs and calls to this service.

God is offering to the layman unprecedented opportunities for service, and nowhere perhaps is there a field of such large and sure returns as in the Church-school. The teaching and religious guidance of the young is today largely in the hands of unordained men and women. Here the Church of the future is being determined. Here the Church has her supreme opportunity to lay the foundations of the kingdom of God. Surely this work is second in importance, when viewed in the light of its possible returns, to no other in all the world, and surely God means that this work shall be taken up by many thousands of those who seek to make investment of their lives according to his will.

In the work of religious education many will be salaried workers in positions which provide for their full time service. A still larger proportion will be unsalaried and can give only a portion of their time to this work. Yet they may give that time none the less as a response to the call of God and as an investment in the kingdom of God.

The hope of the kingdom, in large measure, is in the service, financially unremunerated, of those who shall hear the great call of God to help provide adequately for the religious education of an entire generation, and shall invest their lives in this field of incalculable returns.—Condensed from an article in The Church School, by John W. Shackford.

Ezra's Steadfast Confidence in God. Is it right for one who trusts God to insure his house against fire? Is it right for him to make provision for his family in his old age? What is our Golden Text? If God's hand is upon all his true followers for good, should they not leave all things to him and trust that he will take care of them? Let us see what our lesson teaches as to this.

When Nehemiah went to Jerusalem he had an escort of captains of the army and horsemen of the king. When Ezra went, he trusted in the protection of God alone. Which one did right? Both. It was only common prudence for Nehemiah to have a sufficient guard on a long journey where he was liable to attacks from robbers. Ezra, however, felt that his position was peculiar. He had told the king what great things God could do, and how he trusted God implicitly, and if now he asked the king for human protection on that perilous journey, he believed the king would think that he had merely been talking—that he did not really trust God's power.

Whether or not we agree with Ezra's reasoning, we admire his loyalty to God and his wonderful trust. When no principle was at stake, he could be as prudent and business-like as anyone. Notice the great care he took with the large amount of money and treasure that went with them on the journey. He set apart men whose sole duty it was to guard this wealth, and on reaching Jerusa-

lem he had the silver and gold and vessels weighed in the temple, and the amounts written down, that they might be seen to equal the amounts received in Babylon.

It was the special occasion that freed Ezra. Recall the temptation scene in Jesus' life. "Then the devil taketh Jesus into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge concerning thee'; and, 'On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.'" Did Jesus do as did Ezra, throw prudence to the wind, and thereby prove his trust in God? "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God," was his answer. Only the special occasion could free Ezra from the guilt of making trial of the Lord his God. As a rule, such imprudence would have been presumption. Occasions are rare in the life of a Christian when he is justified in trusting in God without making use of whatever means God has placed at his disposal to secure his own safety.

When Trust without Precaution Becomes Presumption. According to the view of the Christian Scientist, the presence of the physician in the sick-room is equivalent to a disavowal of the faith, a bit of tangible atheism, a thing as heathenish as the calling in the medicine-men of a savage tribe. We ought to be ashamed to summon medical aid seeing that we have boasted of the hand of our God being upon us for good. But this view throughout is miserably mistaken. The whole conception springs out of a lack of appreciation of the divinity that pervades all things, and betrays blindness to the glorious fact that natural laws and processes are the appointments of God and the channels of his grace, which, indeed, they are. There is no Christian Science except as all true science is Christian, and the cultured physician, working closely on the lines which condition health, is a loyal servant of God and humanity, in whom the pious sufferer has special grounds for trust. John Wesley tells that on a certain occasion he was "cured by sulphur and supplication," and all men who are wise as they are good will practise the dual treatment. To refuse medical aid and its prescriptions, trusting wholly in God, may by some be mistaken for a sublime faith, but it is really practical atheism, ignoring as it does the established order of God. Religious men must not presume on a guardianship unknown to other men, and in consequence neglect worldly caution. A marine-insurance company at Cadiz once took the Virgin Mary into partnership, covenanting to set aside her portion of the profits for the enrichment of her shrine in that city, not doubting that she would protect every vessel in which she had such a manifest interest. The infatuated company underwrote ships of all sorts at reduced rates, and forthwith came to grief. The same snare entices spiritually-minded men today; dispensing with ordinary circumspection, they attempt to conduct their business on what they consider a religious basis, when they ought to know that the most religious basis is the sound commercial basis.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in Inspiration for Common Life.

For Discussion. 1. To be religious does not mean to be unbusiness-like.

2. Why have we a dearth of preachers today? The position and authority of a minister a hundred years ago and now. The salary question. The kind of preachers expected. The vastness of possibilities in the field of the ministry. Young women and the ministry.

3. Leaders of religious education. See The Minister, in The Church School, March, 1921.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How much time elapsed between the end of the Book of Ezra and the beginning of the Book of Nehemiah? 2. What is the chief event recorded in Ezra? 3. Who wrote the Book of Nehemiah? 4. Why was it important that Jerusalem's walls should be restored? 5. Do we sympathize as we should with the trials of others? 6. Is our patriotism as fine as was Nehemiah's? 7. How does Nehemiah's prayer show trust? Reverence? Unselfishness? Submission? Definiteness? Penitence? Gratitude? 8. What does his prayer tell us about his character? 9. What are the conditions of successful prayer? 10. For whom are you in the habit of praying? 11. Who was king of Persia in the time of Nehemiah? (Neh. 2.1). 12. How did Nehemiah gain the king's permission to visit Jerusalem? (Neh. 2.1-9). 13. Why was his request a bold one? 14. In what ways did the king further Nehemiah's undertaking?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
EZRA: TEACHER AND LEADER (OR) PRAYER AND DIVINE HELP

Beginning the Lesson. While Esther was Queen in Susa, a Jewish lad by the name of Ezra was living in Babylon. He belonged to a family of priests, and he became himself a very learned priest. He was also a scribe. Who can recall the name of the scribe about whom we heard in the time of Jeremiah? What part did Baruch have in preserving for us the words of Jeremiah? Ezra was very anxious that the words of the Law of Moses should be preserved in Judea and the commandments kept. What did he do about it? Text Explained.

Ezra's Leadership. Dr. J. E. McFadyen, writing in The Pilgrim Teacher, ascribes the effectiveness of Ezra's leadership to three main facts:—

(1) Leader and led were like-minded, inspired by the same spirit and devoted to the same end. The absence of the Levites from the first muster shows that nobody went who did not wish to go. Those who are banded together in a common cause must love the cause: there must be intelligent enthusiasm on the part of the led no less than on the part of the leaders.

(2) The leader was capable of real initiative and authority. Ezra shows fine practical sagacity throughout. He holds a muster of his men before the start proper, and takes immediate steps to have the serious gaps in their ranks filled up. Again, he is not afraid of his under officers. He talks very plainly to them of their obligation to maintain their holiness, and to look after the gifts entrusted to them with vigilance and fidelity.

(3) There was a genuine and practical recognition of God. The expedition was inspired through and through with a sense of the Divine presence.

Young Men and Leadership through the Ministry. One hundred years ago the ministry was the noblest career a young man could choose. It meant dignity, authority, leadership, high standing in the state, and the respect and esteem of all. In the ministry centered learning, intelligence, and judgment.

It is not so now, and every one admits the change. The minister no longer leads the general thought of the community. He is treated with consideration, but too often with patronage. And because the office commands less respect, it is less sought by men of first-rate energy and ability.

Yet it is still true that for young, strong hearts there is no better way of helping their fellowmen. There was never a greater need of spiritual help than there is today, never were there more souls wandering, groping, reaching out with vague desire for something that mere common, daily effort cannot give. No human being can offer these souls such possibility of comfort as the minister whose heart and life are in his work.

Why is it, then, that so many are needed and so few are found? Because it is a life of sacrifice. There is no wealth in it, no luxury. A man must give up ease and good living, and be ready to vow poverty almost as Saint Francis did.

It requires preaching, and few have the gift of eloquence. But preaching is today the least part of the minister's duty. The quiet, intense power of laying a finger on the wounds of the soul and healing them is worth far more than sermons. And many men have that power and could use it, if they would.

Let the thousands of strong young men who want to do good in the world consider how rich and vast are the possibilities in the field of the ministry. If the impulse of the spirit really takes possession of them, no difficulty need stand for a moment in the way.—The Youth's Companion.

Our Golden Text. Ezra had assured the king that the hand of God is upon all those that seek him, for good. But Ezra did not venture upon his long journey without asking God's blessing upon it and God's care on the way. He humbled himself before God, and sought of him a straight way. Prayer brings God's help. Stanley proved this in his perilous journeys in Africa. "On all my expeditions," he wrote, "prayer made me stronger, morally and mentally, than any of my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes, nor dull my mind, nor close my ears; but, on the contrary, it gave me confidence. It did more; it gave me joy, and pride in my forest tracks, made me eager to face the day's perils and fatigues. Civilized society rejoices in the protection afforded to it by strong-armed law. Those in whom faith in God is strong feel the same sense of security in the deepest wilds."

Anna Burnham Bryant writes in The Pilgrim Teacher as follows:—"Stevenson tells a thrilling story of a vessel caught in a great storm off a rocky coast,

in danger of being beaten to pieces on the rough rocks. The passengers were wild with terror. But one man plucked up courage to creep up on deck, contrary to orders, to see for himself how things were going. There he made his dangerous way to the pilot house where he saw the steersman lashed to his post, calmly and steadily holding his wheel and turning the ship out to sea. The pilot saw him, too, and gave him a reassuring smile. Full of sudden cheer and comfort, the passenger went below, telling the frightened company there not to fear any longer. 'I have seen the face of the pilot and he smiled. It is all well.'

"So to Ezra and his company must have come a feeling of peace and assurance when their prayers and fasting brought the conviction that God 'was entreated' of them, and would be their pilot and protector. The dangers were no less real, but they felt that their leader was unterrified."

Helping God's Hand. In a certain Eastern land two sheiks were imprisoned. Sheik Cassim was blind and Sheik Ahmed was lame. They passed their time arguing about passages from the Koran. They came to this passage: "When God creates a human being, he creates also his inheritance, which must come into his possession." Sheik Cassim said this must be taken literally, that God would send each man his portion, without any exertion on his part. Sheik Ahmed, on the other hand, held that God intended each man to exert himself to obtain possession of his inheritance.

It chanced that a wealthy merchant bound himself by a vow to supply the prisoners with good food and extra dainties for a term of seven days. An officer proclaimed through the prison: "Ho! all ye poor, ye that hunger and thirst, come and partake of the inheritance and bounty of God!" Then the prisoners went to the prison yard where the food was given them.

Sheik Cassim would not accept his friend's offer to lead him into the yard. "Nay," he said, "if I have any inheritance in this supply, God will send it to me here." He continued his prayer, while Sheik Ahmed hobbled off to secure his portion.

On the seventh day the merchant himself visited the prison and heard what the blind sheik had said. He was touched by his expression of faith and gave orders that a generous supply of food be brought to the blind man.

The next time that Ahmed saw his friend Cassim he told him of the merchant's kindness, and declared that it proved he was right, the inheritance came to him. "Very true," said Sheik Ahmed, "God is indeed good to all who trust in him. But," he added, "remember that to you, as you waited, God sent a portion only once, whereas I, who took the trouble to go, received a portion seven times from his bountiful hand."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Pray to God at the beginning of thy works, that thou mayest bring them to a good conclusion.—Xenophon.

Happy and strong must we be,—able to endure all things, and to do all things—if we believe that every day, every hour, every moment of our life is in his hands.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

"Aid us, our Father! We know thou wilt aid us:
We are so feeble, and thou art so strong;
Almighty Power that made us and keeps us,
Do thou protect us from danger and wrong."

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VIII. The Second Return from Exile under Ezra's Leadership.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How long is the gap in time between the close of the Book of Ezra and the beginning of the Book of Nehemiah? 2. Where is Shushan? 3. Why was Nehemiah so anxious to learn the news about Jerusalem? 4. Why did the news so trouble him? 5. Who was "this man," verse 11? 6. What can you infer in regard to Nehemiah from Neh. 5.10; 8.17-18? 7. What does Nehemiah's prayer teach us about prayer? 8. Which of his words are adoration? Confession? Thanksgiving? Petition? 9. Which show his feeling of responsibility for others? 10. Whose prayer does the Bible say "availeth much"? 11. Why do you pray? 12. For what do you pray? 13. What besides petition is there in your prayer? 14. Do you try to answer your own prayer? 15. In your prayers this week remember some one each day for whom you have never before prayed. 16. In what way did Nehemiah's return journey differ from Ezra's? (Neh. 2.9). 17. In what respect is Nehemiah like Moses? (Each gave up a high position in a foreign court to help his own people.)

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

Golden Text

The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. James 5.16

LESSON Nehemiah 1.1-11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 42.1-8

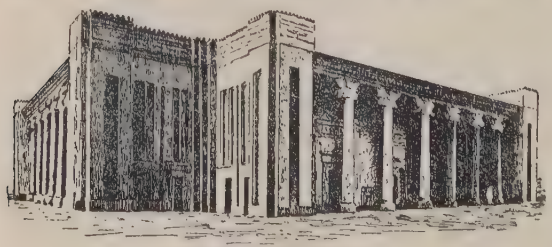
REFERENCE MATERIAL Exodus 32.20-32; 1 Samuel 7.5-11; 1 Kings 8.22-55; Jeremiah 14.19-22; Matthew 9.37,38; Luke 6.12-16; Acts 1.12-14; Ephesians 3.14-21

NEHEMIAH 1.1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.
Now it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, that were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 and said, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments: 6 let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house have sinned: 7 we have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples: 9 but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heavens, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen, to cause my name to dwell there. 10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.
Now I was cupbearer to the king.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE HEADING OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH, verse 1a. The words that follow are *the words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah,* so called to distinguish him from the Nehemiah of Ezra 2.2 and Nehemiah 3.16.



The Palace at Shusan

II. NEHEMIAH RECEIVES GLOOMY TIDINGS FROM JERUSALEM, verses 1b-5. *In the month Chislev,* corresponding to the last part of November and the first of December, *in the twentieth year* of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 2.1, Nehemiah was in the palace at Shushan (Susa) when *Hanani,* his own brother,

Neh. 7.2, and others arrived from Judah. Nehemiah eagerly asked them about Jerusalem and about *the Jews that escaped,* for although free for nearly a century now to return to Jerusalem if they wished, the Jews were still in the habit of speaking of the return as an *escape.*

He was told that the people were *in great affliction and reproach,* that the wall of the city was *broken down,* and the *gates burned.* Evidently this refers, not to the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar a hundred and forty-two years before this time, but to the condition, after attacks of enemies, of walls restored, probably by Ezra, although we have no account of the rebuilding of the walls. Ezra's action against the foreign wives (Ezra 10) would naturally result in hostilities. See the Historical Background. Hanani speaks of *the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province,* for Judah was now a district of the Persian Province of Transpotamia (which means "Beyond the River").

At the news Nehemiah *sat down and wept, and mourned certain days,* for three months, according to Neh. 1.1 and 2.1. To be greatly moved in the face of national calamity is not a sign of weakness, and as Dr. Maclaren puts it, "No man will do worthy work at rebuilding the walls who has not wept over the ruins." Bulwer speaks of "the tear that flows down virtue's manly cheek for other's woes."

III. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER, verses 7-11. *I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven,* thus Nehemiah began his prayer. "That commencement is no mere proper invocation, conventionally regarded as the right way of beginning, but it expresses the petitioner's effort to lay hold on God's character as the ground of his hope of answer. The terms employed remarkably blend what Nehemiah had learned from the Persian religion and what from a better source. He calls upon Jehovah, the great name which was the special possession of Israel. He also uses the characteristic Persian designation of 'the God of heaven,' and identifies the bearer of that name, not with the god to whom it was originally applied, but with Israel's Jehovah. He takes the crown from the head of the false deity, and lays it at the feet of the God of his fathers" (Maclaren). With the remainder of his invocation compare Dt. 7.21; 7.9; Ex. 20.5,6. *Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open,* continues Nehemiah, using a bold yet customary figure of speech, in which he ascribes to God the form of man, *that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant.* How common an experience it is to go to a friend intending to tell him something, but to find him in a mood so wholly at variance with ours that we know our communication will receive but slight attention under the circumstances, and therefore we decide to await a more fitting season! Not so is it with our messages to God, to whom all times and all seasons are alike, and whose ear is ever attentive to our cry.

Confession follows the invocation in Nehemiah's prayer, and while he confesses *the sins of the Children of Israel,* yet he counts himself a sharer in the guilt of the people, saying, *which we have sinned against thee: yea, I and my father's house have sinned.* The individual and family share in the sin of the nation: all reformation must begin with the reformer. Nehemiah then confesses the sins of having *dealt very corruptly against* God, and of not having kept *the commandments,* the statutes and the *ordinances* commanded: see Dt. 28.14.

Next, Nehemiah pleads God's promises; with his words compare Lev. 26.33; Dt. 4.27; 28.64; 30.1-5; Isa. 43.6; 48.20; 62.11. And then he offers his special petition of verse 11—*Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. This man* was Artaxerxes the king. "Artaxerxes was an absolute despot, surrounded with the semi-divine honors that orientals associate with the regal state, and yet in speaking of him before 'the God of heaven,' 'the great and terrible God,' Nehemiah loses all awe for his majestic pomp, and describes him boldly as 'this man'" (Adeney). The *mercy* which Nehemiah hoped for from Artaxerxes was permission to give up his position of power at court and go to the help of his kinsmen in Jerusalem and rebuild its walls. Note that his prayer is most indefinite in words, yet most definite to himself and to God in meaning. Christ tells us that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him. How much more real, sometimes, is communion with God than communion with man! We talk to one another and the very words we use often hide our actual mean-

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ing, but in our talks with God, thoughts need not be expressed in words, or may be very poorly expressed and yet will be understood. To ask permission of the king to rebuild the walls of a conquered city was a bold request, for he might consider it merely the first step toward rebellion.

IV. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED, 2.1-8. Opportunity to make known his desire to the king came a few months later when Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah the cause of his sadness, *for he had not been sad aforetime.* How could he be glad, Nehemiah replied, when his own city of Jerusalem was in so sorry a plight? What is your wish? the king further questioned, and Nehemiah boldly asked to be sent to rebuild the city walls. The king granted him leave of absence for this purpose, appointing him governor of Jerusalem and giving him credentials and passports and letters to his officials and an order on Asaph the keeper of his forest for timber. Accompanied by a military escort he set out on his mission.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I asked them concerning the Jews and concerning Jerusalem, verse 2. The arrival of the most humble and ignorant traveler in the mountain towns of the Lebanon and throughout the Orient is always an event. A meeting is hastily called in the public square and questions are put to the stranger, who in true politeness answers, though he may not know anything about the person or the event regarding which the inquiry is made. When at length he tells of the true state of affairs of the neighboring towns, of the deaths or other changes which have taken place, whether the listeners are in real sorrow over the changes or not, they feel duty-bound to utter some of the wailing verses, tear their hair, and mourn for at least an hour or two. Then the town sends a messenger to tell the afflicted family or community of the sympathetic mournings of his village.—F. E. Haskins, in The Sunday School World.

I sat down and wept, verse 4. In the Orient men as well as women express their sorrow by excessive weeping.

I was cupbearer to the king, verse 11. "The position of cupbearer to an Oriental monarch in those days was not that of a pompous butler with his six feet of height and his two other feet for the display of handsome silk stockings." It was an office of high honor in the Persian court. The king's very life was in the hands of his cupbearer. Before handing wine to the king it was his duty to pour some of it into his own hand and drink, thus assuring the monarch of his conviction that an enemy could not have poisoned it.

Assyrian Cupbearer with Fan and Cup

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the leader of the first Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the Captivity? In what year did they return? What did they do? When and under whom did the second group of exiles return? What have you learned about Ezra and his work? What was the position of many Jews who had remained in Persia?

Ezra's Reform. Last week we heard about Ezra's journey from Babylon to Jerusalem with his company of colonists and his gifts of gold and silver and vessels for the temple. He was made the chief judge of the whole Jewish community, and his first reform concerned the Jews' intermarriage with the heathen people. As Stanley remarks, Ezra was a Scribe first and a Priest afterwards, the temple was an object of his veneration, but it was nothing compared to "The Law." And Dean Stanley calls our attention to the fact that even if the patriarchal alliance of Abraham with the Egyptian Hagar or the Arabian Keturah, or the marriage of Moses with the Midianite or the Ethiopian, provoked a passing censure, it was instantly and strongly repelled by the loftier tone of the sacred narrative, and there had not been the faintest murmur audible when the ancestors of David once and again married into a Moabite family, nor when David took amongst his wives a daughter of Geshur. But it was the

peculiarity of the age through which the religion of Israel was now passing that to the more keenly strung susceptibilities of the nation every approach to the external world was felt as a shock and pollution. The men who had married heathen wives were compelled to part with them and even with their children.

Tidings of Deplorable Conditions in Jerusalem Brought to Nehemiah. Thirteen years intervene between Ezra's reform and the beginning of Nehemiah's memoirs in the Book of Nehemiah. The same king, Artaxerxes Longimanus, is on the Persian throne, and it is now the year 445 B. C. A rebellion of Egypt has been suppressed, but Megabyzos, the satrap of Syria, has been defiant and has succeeded in gaining a measure of independence. Grave disasters have meanwhile befallen the Jews at Jerusalem. The natural inference from the Book of Ezra, which would account for the sad plight of the city as reported to Nehemiah by his brother Hanani, is that Ezra's reforms aroused the hatred of the foreign nations whose daughters had been treated with scorn, and they had made breaches in the city's walls.

The Book of Nehemiah. See pages 24-25 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Shushan was Susa, the magnificent city in the province of Elam which was made by Cyrus one of the capitals of the Persian Empire and was the royal winter residence. It was three hundred miles east of Babylon.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Said a young man to a prominent Christian worker: "What do you think about prayer? I don't know what I think, and most of us, even the best church fellows, don't think it means much—not in real life, you know. I belong to a class and I wish we would have some study about prayer and such things. It seems as if everybody steered clear of it." You have a golden opportunity today to convince your class that prayer means much in real life.

Prayer may mean to your pupils petition merely, it may be to them but a synonym for making requests for one's self. That prayer comprises ever so much more, and that petition should be made for others as well as for self, is seen in Nehemiah's prayer. The true spirit of prayer can be acquired only by prayer, but a careful study of the great prayers of the Bible can start one aright. Study the prayers referred to under "Reference Material" at the head of this lesson.

Your pupils may pray, but their prayers may be wholly perfunctory. The dictionary says that "perfunctory" means "done merely for the sake of getting through." Help them to gain in their prayer life a very real sense of communion with God.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE PRAYER OF A GREAT LEADER

Beginning the Lesson. You recall how Pooley Retallack, in Eden Phillpott's tale of Old Delabole, comes to Tom Hawkey, the manager, and confesses that he is tempted to let the machine at which he is working cut off his fingers, for then, he thinks, the way will be cleared for him to give up his work in the quarries and become a preacher. They agree that Pooley must get away from the machine which so tempts him and take outside work. And then a little later Hawkey comes to Retallack and says: "We're all wrong. We're not tackling this business of ours like men, but like cowards. We're running away. We're throwing up the sponge. We'd never forgive ourselves when we looked back and saw what we'd done." It was his fashion to identify himself thus with any individual who came before him. Another would have told Pooley that he was a coward; but this man shared the blame arising from his discovery.

Nehemiah was a man like that. He had lived all his life in Babylonia, had never seen Jerusalem, yet when he learned of Jerusalem's plight and was convinced that the Jews there were suffering for their sins he prayed: "I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which *we* have sinned against thee. Yea, *I* and *my father's house* have sinned: *we* have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments."

Nehemiah's Prayer. Prayer is the drawing of a soul toward God in recognition of its dependence on him—the recognition of this dependence impels to prayer. Nehemiah was humbly conscious of his dependence on God, and from his prayer we may gain lessons in regard to the content of prevailing prayer. His prayer is earnest, not perfunctory, listless, nor half-hearted; it confesses the sins of the people and his own, acknowledges their debt of gratitude to God, and is full of confidence in a God of lovingkindness and tender mercy; it is unselfish, a prayer for others whose burdens hang heavy on his heart, so heavy that he would sacrifice his position at the Persian court to go to their relief, not a prayer filled with petitions seeking his own gratification; it is specific and does not deal with "vague and glittering generalities"; and it is the prayer of a man who is going to do all he can to help answer his prayer.

Only a small part of Nehemiah's prayer is petition: prayer to us is sometimes but an urgent expression of our own wants. Read the beautiful prayer in the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, and notice that in all its thirty verses there is not one direct petition. Such a prayer of adoration, praise and confession deepens one's realization of God and enriches one's life.

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." One condition of prayer that avails much is that it must be the earnest desire of the one who prays. John Knox prayed, "O God, give me Scotland, or I die," and God gave him Scotland. Nehemiah prayed in effect, O God, give me Jerusalem, or I die, and God gave him Jerusalem.

Prayer and Effort. Why does God refuse to carry out some of our plans which we have framed with a sincere desire to advance his glory? Is it because we refuse to answer our own prayers? Nehemiah spoke to God but he spoke also to man. Speaking to God is not enough. We must speak to Artaxerxes also. To struggle with the king of heaven is not enough, we must also struggle with the kings of the earth. Nehemiah did more than ask God's assistance—he thought, he planned, he labored and sacrificed; and it was because of all this labor that God could work through him his own good pleasure. It is a scientific, unchangeable, everlasting fact that if we ask we shall receive, but we must not ask amiss. We must live on a level with our petitions.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Prayer and Faith. There can be no question that all effective dynamic prayer rises out of living faith. A person cannot let himself go and pour out his soul as he knocks at the great doors of the Divine world unless he believes that there is a Divine world that will be reached by his cry of need. We hear much talk in these days of the subjective character of prayer, but you cannot cut the subjective aspect of prayer away from the objective aspect and keep the former a thing of value and power by itself any more than you can cut the convex side of a curve away from the concave side and keep either a reality by itself alone. In order to have subjective results there must be live faith in an objective reality. A person cannot in this present world of gravitation lift himself by his belt or by his boot-straps, nor can he any more easily, in the inner world of spiritual facts, lift himself or others out of sin or sorrow or loneliness or failure or littleness by subjective strivings which attach to no objective support beyond the margin of his own personal area. The moment the objective side drops out or is assumed to be illusory, the moment we convince ourselves that our Great Companion is only a dream of our own, we immediately fail to get dynamic effects from our subjective strivings. Brother Lawrence was right when he said: "It is into the soul permeated with living faith that God pours his graces and his favors plenteously. Into the soul they flow like an impetuous torrent, when it finds a passage for its pent up flood after being damned back from its ordinary course by some obstacle."

We must have faith in the Beyond. We need not wait until we can demonstrate the certainty of what the far-reaching tentacles of our heart feel to be real, but at least we must have a soul's vision of a More Than Ourselves to whom we turn, on whom we rely and from whom we expect what we need for ourselves and others to live by.—Professor Rufus M. Jones, in The World Within.

Prayer for Others. The most Christlike prayer is prayer for others, that God's will may be done in them, that in the world they may be kept from the stain of the world, that they may be comforted in sorrow, upheld in toil, guided into the fullest fruition of their lives. Such prayer is not simply the normal utterance of Christian faith and love; it achieves wondrous results; in it space is annihilated, and soul touches soul. Devout men have always believed this.

Many a man has felt around him all his life an impelling, restraining influence which he has ascribed to his mother's prayers; in moments of moral peril he has felt himself arrested as by an unseen hand. The great missionary movement has been built up largely upon the prayers of the faithful.

"Away in foreign fields they wondered how
Their simple word had power;
At home the Christians, two or three,
Had met to pray an hour."

Today modern conceptions alike of the universe and of the individual make easier the faith that such prayer is a positive force. True, we are just reaching the first outlook upon an unknown country; what wonders are beyond no man knows. But the glimpses already opening to the vision—the self beneath the sphere of consciousness where some tell us spirit has its meeting-place with spirit, and God with man; the new emphasis upon mental suggestion in healing diseases alike of the body and the mind; the reality of telepathic communication, which is probably the one thing thus far fully established by psychic research—all these aid the belief that when I pray for my friend I am touching him with spiritual energy. When I suggest to him, even if he be distant from me, that he can conquer his weakness, that he can rise above his sorrow, that all things are possible to him that believeth, I am helping to bring spiritual forces at least within his reach, I am pleading for that very faith which the Master always required ere his love wrought its wondrous work.—Dr. Alexander MacColl, in A Working Theology.

Specific Prayer: a Parable of the Prayer Meeting. In an account of "Johnnie's Request," Ada R. Habershon tells how Johnnie left his playmates in the yard while he ran into the house to ask his father for money with which to buy candy.

"Oh, father," said the boy on being asked what he wanted, "I am so glad that you are going to build a new house, and that the drawing-room will have such a beautiful view, and we're so glad that there will be such a splendid room for us children. We are delighted to think there will be a good garden, and that there will be lots of flowers—roses, and lilies and sweet peas, and a frame for violets. We're so looking forward to the fruit we shall be able to gather, the ripe strawberries and raspberries; and, father, we are ever so glad that you are going to have plenty of apple trees and pear trees; and it will be splendid to have a greenhouse with vines and peaches and beautiful flowers. And, father, we are so pleased to hear that you are going to do so much for the neighborhood. The new schools will be a great help to the village people, and we are thinking about the almshouses for the poor old people, and the new ward for the hospital."

"But what do you want, my boy? What did you come in from the garden to ask me for?"

"Please, father, old Peter has come around with his basket; so will you give us sixpence for sweets?"

"Why certainly, Johnnie, here it is."

"Oh, thank you, father," and off he ran to the other children, who were waiting impatiently.

"What a long time you have been, Johnnie," said Bob; "we thought you were never coming, and old Peter wants to go on to the village."

"What were you doing?" said Dick. "Didn't father want to give you the money?"

"Oh, yes," said Johnnie, "he gave it to me as soon as I asked him, but I didn't like to tell him what we wanted too quickly; I thought I'd better talk a little about the new house first."

For Discussion. 1. Jews who stand in positions of influence in our own land.

2. What is our attitude toward the sins of our country? Things in our national life about which we should pray.

3. The nature of prayer. See The Secret Prayer Life, by Dr. John R. Mott.

4. The social ideals of Nehemiah. See The Bible as a Community Book, by Arthur E. Holt.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read Nehemiah 2 to 7. 2. For what purpose did Nehemiah take a midnight

ride three days after reaching Jerusalem? 3. Why was there so much opposition to the rebuilding of the wall? 4. What qualities did Nehemiah exhibit? 5. Who said "Trust in God and keep your powder dry," and how did Nehemiah carry out this thought? 6. What do verses 4.17,22,23 tell about the precautions taken? 7. Did women have any share in the building of the walls? (Neh. 3.12). 8. How were the citizens allowed to act on the principle of self-preservation? (3.10,23, 28,30). 9. What feelings successively filled the hearts of the petty rulers in the neighboring province? (2.10; 2.19; 4.1; 4.7,8). 10. How did Sanballat and Tobiah afterwards show their hostility? (6.1; 13.4,5,8). 11. Which of Nehemiah's contributions helped most in the rebuilding of the walls, his money, materials and men, or his faith and energy? 12. What are the two great events which the Book of Nehemiah records? 13. What lessons can we learn from Nehemiah the man?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PREPARATION THROUGH PRAYER

Beginning the Lesson. Three young men were returning wearied from a long tramp, when they met two small boys who were having all they could do to drag along a well-filled cart. One of the men quietly took the handle of the cart out of their small hands, and went out of his way to pull the cart home for them, talking all the time gaily and giving the boys a merry time. As the other men went on their way, one said to the other: "Queer thing to bother himself about. Does he know all the youngsters in town?" "He probably didn't know them at all," replied the other. "But you don't know him yet, do you? He's like that about everything. He always takes the load."

We have come to the history of a man of affairs, of whom this same fine word of commendation could be said, that he always took the load. Who is he and what was the first load that he assumed for others?

Whatever Concerns Our Fellow-Men, Concerns Us. Moses in his high position at the court of Pharaoh might lightly have said that he could do nothing for his brethren toiling at their forced labors under the lash of the taskmaster. As an Egyptian he could do nothing to lighten their burdens, and he might have spoken a few words of sympathy to them, and then have gone his own way, congratulating himself that he had escaped their hard lot. The only way in which he could bear their burdens was to make himself one of them, to suffer with them, to use his higher wisdom for them as their leader.

The little Hebrew maid in the house of the great Syrian general might have said that in her lowly position as servant she could do nothing to help her master. Surely she had no call to bear his burdens! But she was the only one in all that realm that could send the great Syrian to the prophet in Israel to be cured of his leprosy.

Nehemiah at the Persian court might have felt no obligation resting upon him to go to the help of people he did not know in a far-distant land he had never seen. Yet he was the one whom God chose to bear the burdens of his weaker brethren.

Each one owes something to others. Each one has a duty of lightening the burden of some one else. We are our brother's keeper, and our brother is the one in need whom it is in our power to help. Whatever concerns our fellowmen, in any quarter of the world, concerns us.

Where a Burden-Bearer Should Get his Strength. A conversation on board ship of two men, a convalescent and his friend a doctor, is reported in The Youth's Companion. The convalescent began by talking freely about himself.

"They sent me away for my health," said he, "and I am returning better, but not yet well. The trouble is with my nerves, and I do not seem to get over it, and I am going right back into what occasioned my breakdown. I heard a sermon a while ago, which said that the human race may be divided into two classes, the lifters and the leaners. Now I have three or four brothers-in-law and two or three sons-in-law, and I have to do the thinking and the planning and the financial backing for the whole crowd. I don't mean that they will not work, or that they try to 'sponge' on me. It is merely that they don't know how to work without some one to push them on and show them, and hold them up. There isn't a lifter among them; they are leaners, every one of them,

That's what broke me down, doctor, and that's what I am going back to; and I think over and over again that that preacher knew what he was talking about."

"I wonder if that was all the preacher said?" the doctor remarked.

"Oh, he told everybody to lift, and I am doing that."

"Yes," said the doctor, "but you seem to have got out of the sermon only the lesson that would have been good for other men. I wonder if he didn't also tell you to learn how to lean. A man must lean on something or he cannot lift. He must have faith and hope and something to stand on, or the ground gives way under him. I have a suspicion that the thing you did not get out of that sermon was the very thing you needed. My friend, I rather think the preacher told you to lean on the Lord and then lift. You have learned to do the lifting, and the best advice that I can give you is to learn where to lean."

"I shouldn't wonder if you are right, doctor," said the other, "and now that you speak of it, I rather think there was something of that sort in the sermon."

"There is nothing I could recommend that could possibly do you so much good as just that," said the doctor. "Faith and hope are curative agents of the first value. It is well that a man should lift, but important also that sometimes he should lay down his load in quiet trustfulness. If you can get that out of the preacher's sermon, or mine, it will do you more good than medicine, and you can lift with new courage."

Prayer as a Preparation for Football Playing. The Centre College football team are in the habit of praying before a game. The coach says: "They ask first for protection, so that they'll be able to go clear through the game without injury which would put them out of it. Then they ask that they will be permitted to apply their full strength and ability in the game—that they will be kept free from mistakes and errors. They pray that they will be able to give their all, and state that if in giving their all they give their lives with it they are ready to go. That's the way they pray."

Then the coach added: "When a boy with a clean mind and square instincts prays, his prayer is bound to be answered—if he's praying for what's right to have and to be." When he was asked how it happened that although they prayed before they went on the gridiron against Harvard they nevertheless lost, he replied: "Prayer is not offered for victory; we don't get to decide what is best for us."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The first condition of sympathy is knowledge, and the second is attending to what we do know.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

The true patriot is bound to find that his country needs, above all things, God.—Newton H. Marshall.

He that prayeth for another is heard for himself.—Jewish Saying.

Intercession is love at prayer.—Dr. J. E. McFadyen.

When you pray, get beneath somebody's burden.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Make my prayer from beginning to end a duet: let it ever have two voices—my brother's and mine.—George Matheson.

Blessed Redeemer, how great is my need!
Hear me, I pray, as thy promise I plead;
Thou who hast led me thus far on my way,
"Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day."—D. W. Whittle.

Note-Book Work. IX. Nehemiah's Prayer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How was Nehemiah's prayer answered? 2. Tell about Nehemiah's night inspection of the walls. 3. Why was it essential that Jerusalem should have its walls rebuilt? 4. Why were the neighboring people so hostile? 5. Who were "grieved exceedingly" because there was come to Jerusalem "a man to seek the welfare of Israel"? (Neh. 2.10). 6. What trouble did these men cause Nehemiah? 7. Who were Nehemiah's avowed enemies? 8. Who were his false friends? 9. Why was Nehemiah not discouraged? 10. Which do you think were harder to bear, the threats of the enemies or the disheartening words of the friends? 11. How long did it take to rebuild the walls? (Neh. 6.15). 12. How did the people work? 13. What work is needed in your Sunday-school that you could do? Have you a mind to do it? 14. What two great events does the Book of Nehemiah record?

NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

Golden Text

Our God will fight for us. Nehemiah 4.20

LESSON Nehemiah 3.1 to 7.4 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 48.1,2,9-14

REFERENCE MATERIAL Nehemiah 2.9-20; 1 Corinthians 3.9-17

NEHEMIAH 4.7 But it came to pass that, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth; 8 and they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein. 9 But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. 10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. 11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. 12 And it came to pass that, when the Jews that dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us. 13 Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places, I set *there* the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. 16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. DETAILS OF THE WORK ON THE GATES AND THE WALL, 3.1-32.

II. THE WORK RIDICULED BY SANBALLAT AND TOBIAH, 4.1-6. "What are these feeble Jews up to?" mockingly questioned Sanballat before his brethren and the army of Samaria. "Do they think they can do it all in a day? Do they expect to bring the stones to life out of these heaps of rubbish?" And Tobiah joined in the ridicule: "That stone wall which they are building," he said, "will be broken down if a fox tries to scale it." Their words were repeated to Nehemiah, and he appealed to God to judge them. "Ridicule that comes out of the real humor of a situation may be hard to bear, but the man ridiculed often finds his labors lightened if he can himself see the humorous side. The ridicule of Sanballat and Tobiah, however, came from fear and from a backlying realization of the power of Nehemiah. Bitter taunt against the futility of an evil work is indeed legitimate, but bitterness against a sincere and righteous leader is a revelation of the weakness of the scoffers themselves. Nehemiah kept steadily at his work in face of ridicule. It is something of a comfort to know that Nehemiah provoked his enemies to anger. The trouble with righteous indignation is that many times the man who is indignant has to stop his work to vent his feeling. The resentment of Nehemiah against the enemies of the Lord only made him more determined to finish the wall."

III. MANY ENEMIES CONSPIRE TOGETHER TO STOP THE WORK, 4.7-9,11. "Common hatred has a wonderful power of uniting former foes," and the various peoples of the land, Arabians, Ammorites and Ashdodites, *when they heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward,* and that

the breaks were being filled in (*stopped*), then *they were very wroth.* They feared to have Jerusalem once more a powerful political center, but greater than this fear was their hatred of the religious ideals that inspired its rebuilding. *They conspired all of them together* to go to Jerusalem. Their coming would terrify the timid, work would stop, and *confusion* would result, they thought. They planned to come so stealthily as to take the Jews unawares and by slaying many of them *cause the work to cease.* But Nehemiah posted sentinels *day and night* and prayed, and "to pray and watch is the road to victory."

"What was the prayer of Nehemiah as he set the watch? Quite likely for the Lord to enable the sentinels to keep their eyes open and their senses alert. In our Civil War a Federal general once complained bitterly after a battle that the Almighty had not dealt fairly with his troops. He declared that he was devoted to the Lord and that he was fighting the cause of the Lord, and yet that he had met ignominious defeat. The trouble was that the general had failed to post his pickets properly. All day long the enemy had been moving in a flank march around him. The truth had been pointed out to him by officer after officer. Would this general's prayers to the Lord avail anything in the face of such carelessness? Nehemiah would have said not. He called upon his soldiers to have religion enough to keep awake" (McConnell).

IV. TROUBLE WITHIN THE RANKS, 4.10,12. The wall was half way up, verse 6; "the most ancient wall, the foundations of which were discovered by Sir Charles Warren, must have had a height of two hundred feet," and, as Dr. Maclaren observes, half-way through is just the critical time in all protracted work—the fervor of beginning has passed, and the animation from seeing the end at hand has not sprung up. The people of Judah began to murmur, and to say they could not build the wall, there was too much rubbish, and the strength of those who were trying to clear it away was exhausted. This complaint and discouragement of his own workers must have been even harder for Nehemiah to cope with than the hostile efforts of his enemies. Moreover, again and again, the Jews who lived in the neighborhood of the enemies declared it was futile to attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and urged the workers to give up the work and come and dwell with them.

V. BUILDING AND BATTLING, 4.13-21. Forewarned, forearmed. *Therefore,* in the lowest spaces behind the walls and in the open spaces, Nehemiah placed people with arms, *arrows* for use when the enemy was at a distance, *spears* as the enemy drew near, and *swords* for a hand-to-hand fight. And when he beheld the enemy approaching in the distance, he counseled fearless fight, but the enemy, hearing that their plan for a sudden attack was known to the Jews, retreated, and the latter resumed their work upon the walls. *From that time* onward half of Nehemiah's bodyguard worked on the wall, and half stood ready with spears, shields, bows and coats of mail. Back of the builders were the rulers, ready to issue orders when the trumpet sounded an alarm.

"Nehemiah's wall was to give a downcast and discouraged people a new opportunity in life. It was to help keep alive a civilization which was to bear vast treasures to the world. It stood for that conservation in Israel which would enable Israel to give the most to all mankind. One need not believe that Nehemiah fully understood all this in order to see that the wall he built was to shelter the things which would bring humanity nearer together in days to come. When the wall was completed a furtive people had become a people with a basis for ordered and growing life" (Hugh).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, verse 10. These must have been the removers of the rubbish, for representations in Assyrian monuments show that in that age the heavy blocks were brought into position by means of rollers and pulleys. The removing of the rubbish was drudgery. The men had first to break up the piles with pickaxes, and then rake the pieces into baskets with a heavy, short-handled hoe, and carry the baskets away on their backs.

The coats of mail, verse 16. They probably consisted of metallic scales rounded at the bottom and squared at the top, and sewed on linen or felt. On a bas-relief at Nineveh are seen warriors with coats of scale armor which descend to the knees or ankles. In one of the palaces Layard discovered a number of scales used for this armor. Each scale was of iron two or three inches long,

rounded at one end and squared at the other, with a raised or embossed line in the center, and some were inlaid with copper. At a later period the Assyrian armor was made of smaller scales, which were pointed and ornamented with raised figures, and the coat of mail reached no lower than the waist.—J. M. Freeman in Bible Manners and Customs.

It is unlikely that the common soldiers wore heavy coats of mail. Their defensive armor probably consisted of tough leather doublets protecting the body down to the knees and leaving the arms bare. The hard, specially prepared hides of which they were made were almost impenetrable to the arrow.—Herbert Edward Ryle, in Cambridge Bible.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What three great leaders have we heard about who were zealously active in the restoration of Judah? What did Zerubbabel do? Ezra? What led Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem? What was his petition in his prayer at this time? What was the request which he made to the king? How did Ezra combine prayer with precaution?

Nehemiah Arouses the Jews to the Work of Rebuilding the Walls. Nehemiah began his mission in Jerusalem with great caution. After resting three days, and before telling any one what God had put into his heart to do for Jerusalem, he rode forth in the dead of night to view the city walls that were broken down and the gates that were burned so that he might understand all the difficulties of the task confronting him. Next he summoned the leaders of the people and told them of the God-given purpose that had brought him to the city and of the authority given him by the Persian king, and urged them to undertake the work of rebuilding the wall. He received ready response: "Let us rise up and build."

Ezra not Mentioned in Connection with the Rebuilding. It is strange that Nehemiah does not mention Ezra's work in connection with his account of the rebuilding of the walls. Yet neither Ezra's nor Nehemiah's records are complete. Many scholars think that the 27th instead of the 7th year of Artaxerxes was the date of Ezra's expedition and institution of the Law—between Nehemiah's two visits in 445 and 432 B. C.—and that on Nehemiah's arrival the walls were just as they had been left by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C. If Ezra came before Nehemiah, "his frustrated labor no doubt prepared the way for the latter's success."

The People Organized for the Work. Nehemiah skilfully directed the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem. Around the wall, wherever it was broken down, every one over against his own house, he distributed forty or more groups of workers from Jerusalem and near-by cities, priests and merchants, apothecaries and goldsmiths, nobles and artisans. All worked with zeal—"they strengthened their hands for the good work." How the work prospered amidst opposition from crafty enemies and friendly hinderers, our lesson tells.

Further Efforts of Enemies to Stop the Work. Four times Sanballat and Geshem tried to get Nehemiah into their power by urging him to meet them on the plain of Ono, but Nehemiah answered: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease while I leave it and come to you?" Next in an open letter that all could read, Sanballat accused him of purposing to make himself king, and threatened to make known his object to the king of Persia if he still refused to arbitrate with them. Nehemiah met this with a prayer to God, "Strengthen thou my hands!" As a last resort Tobiah and Sanballat sought to deprive Nehemiah of his influence over the people by making him seem a coward, but "Should such a man as I flee?" Nehemiah exclaimed to their suggestion through a hired prophet that he hide himself in the temple because his life was in danger.

Despite all opposition from enemies and all fears and weakness of workers, the wall was completed in the short space of fifty-two days. With great rejoicing a solemn dedication service was held.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Arabians may refer to those dwelling in the desert south of Judah, but more probably it refers to the descendants of those whom Sargon established in Samaria after the exile of the people of the Northern Kingdom in 715 B. C.

The Ammonites were the inhabitants of the country east of the Jordan between the Jabbok and the Arnon. The Ashdodites were the inhabitants of Ashdod, one of the chief cities of the Philistine plain, due west of Jerusalem near the sea. Jerusalem was surrounded by foes: on the north the half-heathen Samaritans, on the east the Ammonites, on the south—in possession even of Hebron—the Edomites and Arabians, and on the west the Philistines.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
SUCCESS THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND CO-OPERATION

Beginning the Lesson. Josephus wrote of our hero that "he was a man of good and righteous character, and very ambitious to make his own nation happy; and he hath left the walls of Jerusalem as an eternal monument of himself." To rebuild these walls had been the purpose of his coming to Jerusalem. How did he get the Jews to agree to the building? How did he organize them for the work? How was he hindered in his work? Which was the harder to combat, the trouble without or the trouble within the ranks? What measures of precaution did he take? What else did he do? With what result?

Nehemiah the Great Leader. The memoirs of Nehemiah present to us a record of noble endeavor, and show us what can be achieved by one man of courage and faith, whose life is ruled by unswerving allegiance to duty. They reveal Nehemiah as a man of deep feeling and tireless energy and stern resolution. He has his place in the history of revelation, not because of any profound thought on the problems of life, nor because of new insight into truths, but because of what he was enabled to do at a critical period of Israel's history. He was not a prophet who saw visions; nor a poet who interpreted the heart of man. He has no place in the long line of thinkers who have opened up new regions for the human spirit. He was rather a man of affairs, keen, practical, with genius for organization, a born leader of men, a man of iron nerve and passionate energy. He was a practical business man throwing his great capacities into work for the good of his nation.

In a time like ours, when such qualities stand so high in public estimation, and among a people like us more noted for energy than for thought, for business than for vision, it is encouraging to note how similar capabilities were in Nehemiah's case used for the kingdom of heaven. All the powers that dwell within a man can find ample scope, if they be only set to noble ends. But for the consecration of these gifts he would have been nothing but a successful man of affairs, or a high-placed permanent official, or a skillful counselor at the Persian court. Because in the power of a simple faith he gave himself to a great work, he stands in the succession of prophets and psalmists and saints and apostles, having spent himself for the kingdom of God.—Hugh Black, in Listening to God.

The Warp and the Woof of Achievement. The warp and the woof of achievement appear more strikingly in Nehemiah's words than almost anywhere else. Dependence on God linked with resolute self-effort appears in the fourth and fifth verses of the second chapter, several times in this chapter, and elsewhere in the book. Make a list of such instances. Discover them also in David's conflict with Goliath. This age links them less. Self-effort is almost supreme; divine dependence is too often incidental. The modern attitude seems more virile, but really produces less of the heroic and self-sacrificial temper.—E. H. Byington, in The Pilgrim Magazine.

Doing a Great Work. There is something illuminating and stimulating, in these times of materialistic tendency, in a story which is going the rounds of the British press, concerning Dr. John R. Mott, the eminent missionary leader. Whether or not it is true in all of its particulars, it is so characteristically true to the Mott spirit that it is worthy of publication. It appears, according to the story, that "a committee of wealthy, influential men in New York City called upon Dr. Mott and offered him the presidency of a strong business corporation at a salary of $100,000 a year. On hearing the proposition, Dr. Mott became thoughtful and serious. Then tears showed in his eyes. Observing his serious mood and tears, the committee, thinking he was troubled about what his decision should be, suggested that they did not wish him to take the matter of a decision so much to heart. Dr. Mott's reply was that he was not at all troubled about how to decide, and assured them that his decision was reached the moment

the proposition was made. "What pains me," he said, "is that I should have so lived before you that it would come into your minds to come to me with such an offer."

Not that Dr. Mott would in any way condemn business ability, but he feels himself so entirely consecrated to spiritual work that, like Nehemiah of old, he would say, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." The suggestion is simply this—that above all there must be loyalty to the inner call, irrespective of the emoluments of the world.—Zion's Herald.

Leader and People Co-operating in the Work. I saw the men around the Bay after the San Francisco earthquake taking hold together to rebuild the fallen city and build it better. I felt that in their attitude and purpose they too stood in a great and noble succession. Nehemiah, prophet and builder, rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity! Marshall Field, merchant prince and builder, with Robert Collyer, prophet and inspirer, rebuilding the walls of Chicago after the great fire of 1871! Brave men of California standing undaunted in the face of disaster unspeakable worthy to be named in the same honored connection! They were called to be the secular instruments of the Lord's redemptive purpose, bringing order out of disorder, beauty out of ashes, peace out of confusion, and oil of joy to replace the spirit of heaviness. All honor to those resolute souls who like this saint of old showed themselves competent to furnish the leadership for the rebuilding of a city!

But the leaders at Jerusalem would have been powerless without the faithful co-operation of the plain people. "So built we the wall, for the people had a mind to work." Who these "people" were, how they looked, when they died, where they were buried, history does not record. They were simply the plain, untitled people whom the Lord must love since he makes so many of them. He steadily honors them in the prosecution of his great designs. From the rising of the sun until the stars appear these plain people are at work upon all the common fields of earth, myriads of them making the world better by the very way they live in it as they go about lending a hand, speaking the word of kindly cheer, smoothing the way for feet less skillful than their own.

In the minds of those Jews there was the sense of mission from on high. When their great leader and all the people took hold together they were intent upon something more than the rebuilding of a city where men might buy and sell and get gain. The restored city was to be a place touching which the Almighty might say in a supreme way, "I will place my name there." It was to be the center from which spiritual impulses would radiate even unto the ends of the earth. There was in their hearts as they laid stone upon stone the sense of mission and of co-operation with an Eternal Purpose reaching on through the ages, binding them and those who should come after them into one vast enterprise for the moral renewal of the world.—Dean Charles R. Brown, in The Congregationalist.

The Best Soldier. Who is the best soldier? Is it the man who, like Sergeant York, that stalwart son of Tennessee, comes back with an amazing record of enemies killed and captured in daring encounter? Is it the man who risks his life in a mad race through the clouds to bring to earth one of the great airplanes of the opposing forces? Is it the commander who strains every fiber of his intellect to plan the campaign, moving his divisions and regiments with the careful precision of the expert chess-player?

Charles M. Schwab says: "The best soldier of the common good is not necessarily the one who performs the most brilliant individual exploit. He is the one who goes farthest in inspiring the whole gang to do its best."

That expresses it about as well as it can be expressed. Over in France, the man who was always cheerful, always considerate, always full of confidence and enthusiasm, was the one who did most to create that indefinable thing known as "morale" which won the war.

But notice that Mr. Schwab does not limit his definition to the time of war. He says specifically, "The best soldier of the common good." That means you just as much as it does your brother who has put away his khaki. Are you a good soldier? What do you do to maintain the "morale" of the great army which is working toward the betterment of the world, toward the brotherhood of man, toward the everlasting kingdom of God?—Unknown.

The Men who Would not Help. In the details concerning the rebuilding of the walls given in the third chapter, we are told that the nobles of the Tekoites

"put not their necks to the work of their Lord." The metaphor is, of course, of oxen yoked in pairs. "I am sorry for these nobles," writes J. A. Hutton, "because the work was accomplished without them. There is surely no man more to be pitied on God's earth than the man with a chance to do a big thing who does not do it. The walls were built without them, and days afterward, when they would be out taking a walk in the evening, some good man who had done his share in the building of the walls and had forgotten all about the little discussion of the time, would encounter one of these nobles and after the usual greetings would say, 'Are not these fine walls we have now?' And then he would say, 'O, I beg your pardon. You were rather opposed to these walls.' Some nights they would be out alone and a voice would say to them: 'These are fine walls. No doubt this is a far better city than it used to be. . . .' The noble would say 'Silence!' but the voice would go on, because that voice which reminds one of something he ought to have done is God.

"There are no more unhappy men surely in the world than men who know that there is a bit of work which they could do for the glory of God and yet refuse the high call. Henry IV of Navarre, returning from the battle of Arques and meeting one of his generals who had refused to go and fight with him and had sulked in his tent, greeted him in these words, 'Go and hang thyself. We fought at Arques and you were not there.'"

In the laws of Solon it was decreed that in the event of an insurrection breaking out in the streets of Athens, those should be put to death who merely looked on, taking no part in it, on one side or the other. It is a crime to be a mere spectator in the battle of life. Phillips Brooks laments the great multitude of useless men, and of men perfectly contented in their uselessness. "Many a man looks back upon his life, and save for the kindly offices which he has rendered to his immediate associates, he cannot remember one useful thing he ever did. He never stood up for a good cause. He never remonstrated against an evil. He never helped a bad man to be better. A merely useless man! His life might drop out of the host tomorrow and none would miss a soldier from the ranks. No onset or defense would be the weaker for his going. I know not how he reconciled it to himself."

Success through Co-operating with the Divine Leader. In the crisis of the Civil War President Lincoln said to General Sickles:—"In the pinch of your campaign up there, when everybody seemed panic-stricken and nobody could tell what was going to happen, I went to my room one day and locked the door and got down on my knees before Almighty God, and prayed for victory at Gettysburg. I told him that this was his war, and our cause his cause, but that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. Then I made a vow to Almighty God that if he would stand by our boys at Gettysburg, I would stand by him, and he did stand by you boys and I will stand by him. And after that, I don't know how it was and I can't explain it, but soon a sweet comfort swept into my soul that God Almighty had taken the whole business into his own hands, and that is why I have no fears about you."

A Revival from a Rubbish-heap. The great bush solitudes had taken the place of the bustling streets. He—an Australian minister on holiday—rested on a fallen tree beside the dusty track. He drew from his breast-pocket his Bible, and, his mind recurring to his own attempts to build the city of God among the haunts of men, he turned to the stately old story of Nehemiah. He read on, undisturbed by the drowsy hum of insects and the merrier song of birds, until arrested by Sanballat's question: "What do these feeble Jews? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" It was an awakening phrase, a revival from a rubbish-heap! He laid the open Bible on the mossy log beside him and lost himself in contemplation.

There is the law of transformation. God makes his loveliest roses out of rubbish. The charred ashes of yesterday's bush nourish the roots of tomorrow's orchard. If the refuse of the ages had been allowed to accumulate the world would be uninhabitable. The air would be heavy with pestilence. We bury our rubbish, and it all comes back to us in fruits and flowers. Its resurrection body is divine.

It is just here that the Church finds her most acute problem. In every community there are crowds of people who have gone to the wall. They feel crushed and beaten. Under our fierce competitive system the iron law of the survival of the fittest has flung them on the social slag-heap, and they know it.

They hate the churches, because the churches are old, and they think that if the churches had done their duty, things would not be as they are. They forget that if the churches had *not* done their duty, things would be ten thousand times worse than they are. They snatch at every social quackery and political panacea. Now, the Church's mission is to do for this ruined mass what Nehemiah did for the rubbish-heaps of Jerusalem—to build out of them the city of God. "Will they bring a revival out of a rubbish-heap?" asks Sanballat. Of course. A rubbish-heap is God's raw material. A revival is his finished product. Let the Church get to work. She alone is equipped for so divine a duty. If she fail, her collapse will be the disaster of the ages. In that melancholy event, this social rubbish-heap will become, like all untransformed rubbish-heaps the menace of mankind and the peril of the world. In it all pestilential fever-germs will breed and multiply. Anarchisms and revolutions will fill the air with shrieks and screams. But the Church of Jesus Christ knows how to transform this mass of refuse into a field of roses. Paul understood the magic secret. He looked upon the unbridled lust, the grinding tyranny, and the hideous idolatry of the city of the Cæsars, and was unabashed. And he gave his reason. The gospel, he said, is the power of God unto transformation. He saw that the foulest filth of Rome might become the fairest fragrance of the New Jerusalem.—Condensed from The Luggage of Life, by F. W. Boreham.

For Discussion. 1. The people who "had a mind to work," verse 3, were the same ones who had been utterly discouraged and helpless. Qualities of a great leader as exemplified in Nehemiah. See chapter XI of Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Dr. R. W. Rogers. The need today of men like Nehemiah who combine practical business acumen with piety.

2. The effect of ridicule. Is it ever justified? "He who is severed from a cause he knows is right, through fear of ridicule, taunts, sneers or sarcasm of those around him, is not a man self-directed by right. He is only a weak puppet pulled by the strings of manipulation in the hands of others" (Wm. George Jordan).

3. The sword and the trowel in modern life. It was an effective correlation of the constructive with the defensive forces of human society. The religious leader who counsels his people to do with their might what their hands find to do in building a form of society worthy to be esteemed as the Kingdom of God on earth, and at the same time counsels them to smite hip and thigh the saloon and the brothel, the gambling den, the unjust employer of labor and the knavish employé who is a slacker, the political grafter and all other vermin which prey upon society, is a man of sword and trowel, ready alike to build that which is good and to drive back the forces of evil.—Dean Charles R. Brown.

4. If you will not help, at least do not hinder. "Pull, push, lift, carry—do something, or get out of the way and let others build. Cowardice and idle criticism on the part of supposed friends are as fatal to successful work as the open hostility of the foe."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Nehemiah do in regard to the government and peopling of Jerusalem? (Neh. 7.1-4; 11.1,2). 2. What is the title printed in your Bible above the 119th Psalm? 3. Read the Psalm carefully and check every verse in which the Law is not mentioned in some way. 4. What reasons can you give for the people's desire to have the Law read? 5. What did the attitude of the people, verse 6, signify? 6. Why was the day called holy unto the Lord? (Num. 29.1; 10.10; Lev. 23.24). 7. What facts in regard to the right kind of preaching or teaching does the lesson give? 8. What facts in regard to the right kind of hearing? 9. Do more or fewer persons read the Bible today than formerly? 10. What is your habit in regard to the reading of your Bible?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: A MIND TO WORK

Beginning the Lesson. Humphrey Corners was not a very pleasant place in which to live, because it was not kept clean. One great eyesore of the place was a vacant lot, directly opposite the church, where old rubbish, bottles, tin cans, broken crockery, old shoes, etc., were thrown. But one day Lorna Conree had a real inspiration, and that very afternoon called a meeting of all the boys and girls, and the idea that she laid before them was so unusual that it "took"

at once. The next morning every boy was at the dump almost before light. They wheeled soil from a vacant lot near by and threw it here and there on the refuse heap, and then they dug up the hard earth around the edges. The next morning it was the girls who slipped out of their beds before others in the families were awake. They brought seeds and threw them by handfuls over the pile and planted them in the earth that the boys had dug up. Then they waited. At first no one but the boys and girls noticed that the seeds were pushing their way through the earth, but at last the little plants began to climb over the pile and the secret was out: somebody had been planting nasturtiums.

The next Sunday the minister's text was "Over against his own house." "I think the children have set us older folk an example which we must follow," he said. "Like the people of Nehemiah's day all the children had a mind to work, and they covered the disagreeable and unpleasant things with beauty. We, too, must work in the dirt and work hard. Let us every one get right to work over against his own house and make this a clean town." And they did.

The minister's text (the account is condensed from a story by Bertha Burnham Bartlett in the Sunday-School Times) was taken from the third chapter of Nehemiah, which gives details of the work on Jerusalem's walls that Nehemiah began soon after reaching the city. Who had made him governor there? How had he come to Jerusalem? What was the first thing he did after resting three days? Why?

Overcoming Difficulties. "Now, Mr. Tapley," said Mark (in Dickens' story), giving himself a tremendous blow in the chest by way of reviver, "just you attend to what I've got to say. Things is looking about as bad as they can look, young man. You'll not have such another opportunity for showing your jolly disposition, my fine fellow, as long as you live; and therefore, Tapley, now's your time to come out strong or never!"

Things were seemingly looking about as bad as they could look when the walls around Jerusalem had reached half their destined height. There was trouble within and without. The workers were discouraged, so weary and so faint-hearted that they declared they were not able to build any more of the wall. Their helpers, the Jews who had come from more distant places, received disheartening news from the men of their home towns, who came to them and kept saying over and over, "This work can't go on, it cannot; you must return with us and defend your own homes." And they knew that their enemies were planning a sudden attack and were confident of victory. Now was Nehemiah's time for coming out strong, and he did. He refused to be discouraged. He put heart into his people. "Be not ye afraid of them," he cried: "Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight." And by his own indomitable will Nehemiah triumphed; he won the victory over the discouraged workers, the discouraging friends, and the distressing foes, and soon he could report: "We returned all of us to the wall, every man unto his work." One resolute man had "come out strong" and had outgeneraled the multitude.

The People Had a Mind to Work. When the walls were rebuilt several things were needed. In the first place, they needed many men. In the second place, they needed strong men. They also needed rulers to direct and spearmen to protect. They needed fine weather and much material, but all of these things would have been of little avail if they had lacked what the last part of the sixth verse says the people had. "The people had a mind to work." It was not a question of time or strength or material or money, but of having a mind to work.

What we call "genius" is very often more fittingly called "hard work." Great tasks are undertaken and great projects completed today because the people have a mind to work. Some people are looked upon as failures because they have a mind to get out of work.

In our church and Sunday-school work we need not more brains, more strength, more ability, more time, more opportunity, but a mind to work. The same is true in the schoolroom, in the office and factory and in the home. When you hesitate in the future to do what you are asked to do, pause an instant and ask yourself this question, "Have I a mind to work?"—E. C. Knapp in The Westminster Teacher.

The Example of Nehemiah. Margaret was in a peck of other people's troubles. As usual, she fled to Miss Nairn.

"What in the world can I do about it?" Margaret questioned. "Everywhere

people are suffering and needing help. It's so discouraging! What is anybody going to do with only one pair of hands?"

"The only thing I can think of," answered Miss Nairn, "is to follow the example of Nehemiah."

"Nehemiah? Why, he was an old Jew, wasn't he?"

"Yes." Miss Nairn smiled in spite of herself. "One of those old Jews whose stories were written down for our help and instruction. Nehemiah's problem seems to me very much worse than yours, but that doesn't prevent his example being of use to you."

"What was his problem?"

"To rebuild a ruined city in the face of powerful opposition with the aid of a small band of patriots. Conditions were so bad that people said, 'Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish that have been burned?' Jerusalem was literally in rubbish."

"What did he do?"

"He built it up. The third chapter of his history is full of the names of the builders, and again and again significant little phrases, 'over against their house,' 'by his house,' 'every one over against his house,' and even 'over against his chamber,' appear.

"I've thought of it so often, Margaret, 'over against their own houses.' If people would take that as a motto, how it would help! Of course there must always be people to go afield, people who have a 'call' to do so and the leisure to obey. But suppose that the rest of us, who haven't time nor strength to spare for that sort of work, just start in, in the fashion of Nehemiah's helpers, 'over against our own houses.' Surely it's our first duty to build up the broken walls that we can see from our own windows. Do you see what I mean?"

Margaret nodded. "Yes, I do. More than you realize, perhaps," she said. "I just found out today that one of father's tenants is being helped by a charity organization society. That's my wall, isn't it? And our laundress has a little lame boy," she added thoughtfully. "I can see quite a good many holes in the wall right 'over against my chamber.' Though it's not very spectacular, I suppose I'd better stop those up before I go down to offer a hand in the public buildings."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord.—Paul.

We may not be responsible for discouragements suggesting themselves, but we are responsible for letting them become dissuasive.—Alexander Maclaren.

The true way to meet opposition is two-fold—prayer and prudent watchfulness.—Alexander Maclaren.

Prayer and faith do not lead to inactivity and sloth.—F. B. Meyer.

I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything,
I shall not refuse to do the something I can do.—Edward Everett Hale.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. X. Nehemiah, the Man of Action.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what shape was the Book of the Law? 2. Were children present when the Law was read? 3. How did the people show reverence? 4. Why did the people weep when they heard the words read? 5. When before have we heard of sorrow caused by the reading of the Law? 6. What do these texts say about the Word of God: Ps. 19.84; 119.9,92,104; Prov. 6.23? 7. Read Psalm 119, which has been called "the Hymn of the Law," and copy the verses that tell what the Law is. 8. Where in the early part of the Acts is there a scene when the Bible was read and the sense was made plain? 9. How many teachers were there? (verse 7). 10. How long did the people listen? Do you wonder at their patience? 11. Explain verse 10. 12. Is it a Christian's duty to be happy? 13. How much time do you spend each day in Bible reading? 14. Do you carefully read the word of God chosen each week for our lessons? 15. Do you listen attentively to the explanation of the lesson in class? 16. Is there some sick or blind person to whom you might read the Bible?

TEACHING THE LAW OF GOD

Golden Text

**Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of thy statutes;
And I shall keep it unto the end. Psalm 119.33**

LESSON Nehemiah 8.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.97-105

REFERENCE MATERIAL Deuteronomy 6.4-9; 2 Chronicles 15.8-15; 30; Acts 17.1-9, 10-15, 16-34; 19.8-20; Colossians 1.9-11

NEHEMIAH 8.1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel. 2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were *attentive* unto the book of the law.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength. 11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. 12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE READING OF THE LAW, verses 1-8. The streets of Jerusalem today are very narrow, just as they have always been, most of them resembling an alley rather than a street. The only spot where a large company could assemble would be a *broad place* or open square, or else beyond the city walls. At such a place before the *water gate* (the gate through which the water-carriers entered the city from Gihon, or the Virgin's Spring as it is now called), *all the people gathered themselves together as one man.* They bade *Ezra the scribe* and *priest* (see Ezra 7.6,11) *bring the book of the law of Moses.* Exactly what this refers to is a disputed question among scholars: the entire Pentateuch, some believe; the legislative portions only of the Pentateuch, others maintain. It is interesting to recall that in the Apocryphal Book of Esdras the statement is made that Ezra and five companions re-wrote the Law. "Ezra never appeared as a solon legislating for his people. Still neither was he a Justinian codifying a system of legislation already recognized and adopted. He stands between the two, as the introducer of a law hitherto unpracticed" (Adeney).

Upon the first day of the seventh month. Tishri, the "sacred month" of the Jews in which were celebrated the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (since the time of Alexander the Great the first day of this month has been kept by the Jews as their New Year's Day) Ezra

read the book of the law to *the men and the women* and such children as were capable of understanding what was read. *From early morning until midday he read* (on account of the heat they had their customary rest during the noon hours), the reading evidently alternating with the instruction, verse 8. And the historian impressively adds that *the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.* "We have here an instance of the wonderful compelling power of the Scriptures when they are given a chance with a fresh and responsive mind" (McConnell).

Ezra stood on a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose (some one has called this "The Pulpit's Birthday"), before the fresh fortification probably, "which would act as a sounding-board," and when he unrolled the roll *all the people stood up.* In the synagogue services of Christ's day the people stood during the reading of the Law; here, however, it is not necessary to suppose that the people stood the entire six hours, but only that they stood while Ezra offered his prayer, verse 6. "In the modern synagogue prayers are offered when the Law is taken from its keeping-place and when it is returned" (Davies). To Ezra's words the people responded with *Amen, Amen,* so be it, *with the lifting up of the hands,* evidently with the palms upward in supplication for the Divine blessing, and *worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.* "We should learn the lesson taught by the waiting crowd, prone on their faces and blessing God for his word. Such reverential attitude must ever precede reading it, if we are to read aright" (Maclaren).

In verse three we are told that Ezra read. Now the record says *they read in the book.* Evidently Ezra began the reading, possibly did all the reading, and the Levites mentioned in the seventh verse repeated and explained the words to separate groups of people. They read *distinctly,* or as the marginal rendering has it, they read *with an interpretation.* And *they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.* This may mean either that the classical Hebrew was so different from the common Aramaic dialect then used (see Light from Oriental Life) that it needed interpretation, or, more probably, that explanations and comments were given so as to make the law clear to every one.

II. COMFORTING THE PEOPLE, verses 9-12. *Nehemiah the governor* now comes into the story. He and Ezra and *the Levites that taught the people said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep.* The day was holy because it was new moon and the day of the blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23.24), and also because of the reading of the Law. The people were weeping as they heard the *words of the Law.* Recall the effect on Josiah of the reading of the Law, Lesson 8 of the Second Quarter, and the reason there given in the nineteenth verse. The people evidently had not known the requirements of the Law and realized their guilt for the first time. "The priestly circles would be in possession of traditions, usages, and even written documents, but such knowledge was clearly not the property of the people" (McFadyen).

Then he (either Nehemiah or Ezra) counseled the people, *Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet*—a proverbial expression for "Do not fast nor mourn." "She used to say that those who did not have a good time in this world, disobeyed the commandment, 'Drink the sweet.' There is something sweet at one time or another for everybody, and there's no need to go drinking a bitter cup the whole time. Sometimes the Lord does put it to the lips, and the people must 'take it with both hands and drink it'; they'll find comfort at the bottom of the cup. But to go exploring round as Maria does for all sorts of worriments, and testing of every cup that looks a mite bitter, is what I don't believe in" (Wellspring). *And send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared.* See Dt. 26.11-13; Esther 9.19. "The best way to create joy in our own hearts is to set ourselves to create it in others. It is not enough to eat the fat and drink the sweet in our own selfish little corner; we must send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. In every circle there are many who look across a desolate world, which has no reassuring smile, no greeting voice, no loving or loyal heart. Look out for these. They hide for the most part like wounded game in the thicket. Go forth to be a joy-bringer to such as sit in darkness and the shadow of death" (F. B. Meyer). *Neither be ye grieved,* the speaker concluded, *for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.* After penitence and pardon should come rejoicing, and their joy should be in Jehovah. "And does not joy make us strong? What nimbleness joy gives to the feet!

The sad heart wearies in a mile, the joyful heart is fresh and exuberant at the end of the tenth mile. We sometimes say when the heart is glad and sunny, that we feel we could jump over the moon! Serve the Lord with gladness" (Jowett). And *the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy.* It was an ill-omen to use words or signs of lamentation on a feast day, Hab. 2.20. And all the people obeyed. They kept the festival with *mirth,* rejoicing especially because they had heard and understood the words of the Law.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading, verse 8. For a century and a half the national life of Judah had been suppressed. The cream of the nation had been deported into Assyria and Persia, many thousands had fled and escaped into Egypt, while the lowest and poorest, who had been suffered to remain, had been intermingled with Syrians, Samaritans, and other neighboring races. For nearly five generations they had been mingled with the heathen and had learned their language. Hebrew had become to them by this time almost a strange tongue. We know how the Alexandrian Jews united to supply the Greek version of the Scriptures, the Septuagint, for their countrymen, to whom Greek had become their mother-tongue. In the East, by the Tigris and the Euphrates, the change was even more rapid, and the cognate dialect of Chaldee (in which language part of Ezra, Daniel, and other post-exilic inspired books are written) became within two generations the colloquial medium of the exiles. Another cognate tongue, the Syrian, or Aramaic, had supplemented Hebrew in the Holy Land itself; and the language of Moses was little less strange to the Chaldee-speaking exile of the return, or to the peasant of Judea, than Latin was to the Italian five hundred years ago—not utterly unintelligible, but rendering it needful to give the sense.—H. B. Tristram, in Bible Manners and Customs.

Send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared, verse 10. This has generally been interpreted to mean that the wants of the poor were to be supplied; but Harmer prefers to refer it to the custom of sending a portion of a feast to those who cannot well come to it, especially to the relatives of those who give the feast, and to those in a state of mourning, who in their grief would make no preparation. In Nehemiah it may mean a mutual exchange of the good things provided for the feast.—James M. Freeman, in Bible Manners.

Charity is obligatory by the law of Mohammed. The Koran bids a tenth to be given to the poor, but this may be considered as unknown. At assemblies, feasts, and marriages, the poor, or rather the mendicants, receive either food or coppers, and they seem to be proud of the *rôle* they have to take in order to allow others to fulfill the law. The beggars generally lean on a long stick—for they must feign some infirmity—and carry a tin or wooden bowl dangling on their arm—their trade-mark as it were—and they assemble at the doors of mosques or churches, where they receive a few coppers. The Jerusalem corporation of mendicants is certainly well supplied with cripples, blind, and feigning beggars, for they have here every opportunity for asking alms of the pilgrims of all nations who meet here, and liberally give to the miserable-looking people.—Phillip Baldensperger, in Palestine Exploration Fund Statement.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When the Book of the Law was found in the temple in Josiah's day, what effect did the reading have upon him? Why? What was the shape of the Book? What were its contents? What other religious revivals have we studied? What have we learned about Ezra?

The Walls Dedicated. There was great rejoicing when the wall about Jerusalem was finished. At the imposing dedication there was a procession of two great companies, one of them headed by Ezra and the other by Nehemiah. During the fortifying of Jerusalem we have heard nothing of Ezra, and yet according to Ezra 7.9 he had gone to Jerusalem thirteen years earlier than Nehemiah. See page 310.

The City Organized. Nehemiah's chief concern after the fortifications of Jerusalem were restored was to organize the government of the city by appoint-

ing over it Hanani, his brother, and Hananiah the governor of the castle, to give it a large population by bringing into it many who were living without (7.1-4; 11.1-2), and to register the people, comparing the first list of those who had returned with the people actually in the city.

The Reading of the Law. Now that the city walls were rebuilt it was time to turn to the rebuilding of the people's lives. Chapters 8-10 tell of the adoption of the Law. Ezra the priest and the scribe becomes the chief figure in the history.

A Rabbi Reading the Law

The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes; the Law was read on the first day of the seventh month, but the year is not given. The place where the great assembly met was the broad place before the water gate in the wall of Jerusalem. The building of synagogues which we hear of in the New Testament times where the Law could be read was a natural outcome of such assemblies.

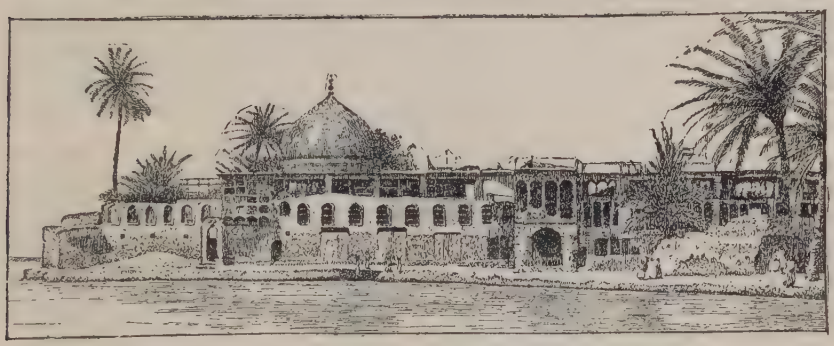
Ezra 8 and Nehemiah 8. The narrative in Neh. 8 links admirably with the narrative in the eighth chapter of Ezra. That chapter describes Ezra's journey to Jerusalem, the object of which was, according to Ezra 7.14, "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thy hand," and to teach the law to those that did not know it (compare verse 25). That is almost exactly what Ezra does in the chapter we are considering, and there is therefore a strong presumption that Ezra 8 should be followed by Neh. 8. Against this may be urged the fact that the gathering at which Ezra expounded the law is definitely assigned to the seventh month which is most naturally referred to the year in which the walls were completed by Nehemiah—indeed the month after (Neh. 6.15). But nothing but the present order of the book of Nehemiah obliges us to accept this view; and there is nothing to hinder us from believing that the seventh month is that of the year after Ezra's return to Jerusalem, which would be about fourteen months after his arrival.

The eighth chapter of Nehemiah loses nothing in interest and gains considerably in sequence and lucidity if it is read after the eighth chapter of Ezra. We then see how Ezra proceeded to execute the commission upon which he had been sent by the king.—Dr. John E. McFadyen, in The Pilgrim Teacher.

A Time when Great Issues Originated. "Within the century which ended with the age of Nehemiah the teaching of Moses was established as the basis of the national life, and the first steps were taken toward the formation of a canon of Scripture. Jewish society was molded into a shape which succeeding centuries modified, but did not essentially change. During this period, the Judea of the days of our Lord came into being. Within this period the forces which opposed Christ and the forces which rallied to his side had their origin. This century saw the rise of parties, which afterwards became sects, under the names of Pharisees and Sadducees. It laid the foundations of Rabbinism. It fixed the attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles. It put the priesthood on the way to supreme authority. It gave birth to the Samaritan schism."

"Nehemiah's Library." If we may trust the first tradition on the subject

which can be traced, it was Nehemiah who first undertook to form a Library of the books of the past times: namely, of "the Books of the Kings, and Prophets, those which bore the name of David, and the Royal Letters concerning sacred offerings." It is evident from the terms of the description that "Nehemiah's Library" was not coextensive with any existing canon. It was not a formation of Divine oracles so much as a repository of whatever materials from whatever sources might be useful for the future history of his people. It was not the complete canon of the Old Testament which was then formed, for some even of the earlier books, such as Ezekiel, had not yet fully established their right; and many books or parts of books now contained in it were still absent. Nor was it based on the modern idea of a strictly sacred volume, for one of its chief component parts consisted of the official letters of the Persian kings, which



Tomb of Ezra, Near the Junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates

have never had a place in the ecclesiastical roll of the consecrated Scriptures. It was the natural and laudable attempt to rescue from oblivion such portions of the Hebrew literature as, with perpetually increasing additions, might illustrate and enforce the one central book of the Pentateuch, round which they were gathered.—Dean Stanley, in History of the Jewish Church.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

The right kind of Bible teaching is here shown in a nutshell. It was for all men, women and children. They were no doubt in "graded" groups, each under the leadership of one of the Levites, verse 7. It was a model school, for they were not only willing but eager—the request for the reading came from them to Ezra. The classes were interested, attentive (verse 3), reverent (verses 5,6), responsive (verse 6). The Scripture was explained so that every one understood its meaning. So clearly was it expounded, and so impressively was it taught, that its truth touched their consciences, made them see how far short they had come of fulfilling its commands. The effects of the teaching did not stop with penitence, for knowledge led to worship and service.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CO-OPERATIVE BIBLE STUDY

Beginning the Lesson. This Bible reading reminds us of scenes which used to take place in days before the wide distribution of Bibles placed a copy in every man's hand. When the Bible was first permitted to be read in public in England in the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, a copy was placed in St. Paul's Cathedral, and "many well-disposed people used to resort much to the hearing thereof, especially when they could get any that had an audible voice to read to them. Our John Porter used to occupy himself in this godly exercise and great multitudes would resort to hear him." This from an old chronicle gives the nearest approach in recent times to this ancient scene in the streets of Jerusalem.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

How the Word Has Been Read through the Centuries. If we can judge correctly of the character of the preaching of the apostolic times by what is

recorded of Stephen, Philip, Apollos and the apostles themselves, it consisted chiefly in showing that all the Gospel facts were the fulfilment of the Divine plan as predicted, warranted and explained in the Holy Scriptures. These preachers did, each in his own way, exactly what Jesus himself did in his conversation-sermon on the way to Emmaus, when, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," and showed the disciples who were troubled "by the things that had come to pass in these days" that these were the very things they would have anticipated if they had only read aright their own Scriptures, which unrolled before their eyes the whole plan of God's redeeming love, including the incarnation, the sufferings and death of Christ and the glory which was to follow.

During the period immediately following the apostles and extending to Gregory, known as the Patristic period, the sermon consisted chiefly of running comments on the Scriptures, the style varying according to the temperament and local requirements of the preachers. Origen was expository; Augustine theological; Chrysostom oratorical; Gregory metaphysical; many of them given to allegorical interpretation, but all aiming to unfold the contents of the Bible. It was during that period of Biblical preaching, and largely because of it that the Church became master of the Roman world.

From that time to the Reformation the character of the preaching was powerfully affected by the rapid growth of ecclesiastical imperialism. The mediaeval period produced some of the most powerful preachers of Christendom; but the sermons took on many other elements than those that characterized those of the Patristic age. Bible exegesis ceased to be the dominant feature, and practically all were filled with the spirit of the rapidly growing churchism. Preachers preached the supreme authority of the Church rather than that of the Bible. We meet with many mighty spirits in the pulpit of these centuries. Scholasticism was represented in Aquinas, pietism in Bonaventura; mysticism in Tauler; a sweet combination of theology and rhapsody in Bernard. But we sadly miss the "joyful sound" by the music of which God's people were able "to walk in the light of his countenance." The Bible was no longer the supreme feature of the pulpit utterance. Corresponding with its neglect was the decline of the spiritual life of the Church. "The dark ages" ensued.

In the depressing moral condition of the mediaeval period many devout and scholarly men sought relief in a return to the study of the Bible, and thus prepared the way for the Reformation. The sermons of the reformers were characterized by the strong emphasis they placed upon the exegesis of the sacred book. The Word of God again sounded in the darkness, and the miracle of creation was repeated. "It was light." Unfortunately controversy soon became a common feature of Protestant preaching and the pulpit often became the arena of gladiatorial combats. But in it all the final appeal was to the Bible. And on that foundation Protestantism stands.

The modern period of preaching cannot be easily characterized. It exhibits widely divergent types of sermons both in substance and purpose. But in looking over the entire history of modern preaching two things appear.

First, every great spiritual awakening in the Church may be traced directly as effect and cause to deeper understanding of the holy Book. Those religious movements directed by Luther, Wesley, Edwards, Finney, Moody and Sunday are conspicuous examples. The same is true of local revivals which do not command wide attention. They have been started and sustained by preaching the Bible.

Second, churches in which the Bible is persistently preached are invariably centers of moral and spiritual strength. They do not always command popular applause, but they are sure to cultivate a high ideal of personal character and to conserve the best interests of the community.

Through the Scriptures flow the streams of living waters which have refreshed and enriched the ages. The preacher who turns aside from them to modern novelties only dips his cup in stagnant pools. I am sure that Professor Fosdick was right when he said: "Could increasing numbers of our men go out from this school into the churches clearly seeing, thoroughly believing, deeply experiencing the truths of the Scriptures and on fire to preach them, we could here become such a center of an access of spiritual power as would mean a new era in America's religious history."—Condensed from an article in The Christian Advocate, by Dr. A. H. Tuttle.

The First Co-operative Bible Study Schools. All honor to the founder

of Sunday Schools, Robert Raikes of Gloucester, England! Before his first school was established there were classes held on Sunday here and there for the purpose of studying God's Word. We know that one school in the American Colonies had to be abandoned because the schoolhouse was needed for a hospital after the battle of Brandywine, in 1777. But Robert Raikes was the first not only to establish numerous schools but so to advocate the Sunday-school system far and wide as to bring about its general adoption. It has been said of him that "He raised Sunday-school teaching from a fortuitous rarity into a universal system. He found the practice local: he made it national."

By 1784 many schools had been established in Gloucestershire, and five years later it was computed that there were 300,000 scholars at Sunday-schools in the United Kingdom. "No plan has promised to effect a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity since the days of the Apostles," a writer of that time declared. This great co-operative Bible study was inaugurated by Robert Raikes upon the banks of the Severn, but as James Montgomery sang, the movement speedily became world-wide:

"Once by the river-side,
A little fountain rose;
Now, like the Severn's seaward tide,
Round the broad world it flows."

What would our scholars today think of this rule which was in force in England a hundred years ago? "Any child being absent from morning or afternoon school, unless by the reasonable desire of the parents (of which notice must be given), or by permission of their teachers, will be liable to reproof; and if absent three successive Sundays, will subject themselves to be dismissed the school." But can one whose attendance is irregular profit as he should from the golden opportunity which the church school affords?

Said Mr. Wanamaker in an address given a dozen years ago: "At the time of the great Exposition at Columbia there went from Europe to America a number of educationalists, who on their return gave their reports as to the reasons for the prosperity of the United States. One delegation reported that the largest thing they discovered as helping in the welfare and education of the American people was the Sunday-school idea. A large delegation from Japan, consisting of bankers, railroad presidents, and other leaders of commerce who could not be expected to be intensely interested in the Sunday-school, confessed that they saw nothing so hopeful in the country as its Sunday-school life."

Feed your Soul upon God's Work. You cannot live by work in the physical realm unless you have proper food and air. If you will find me man, woman or child who is neglecting the study of the Word of God, I will show you arrest of spiritual development. No other means to growth can take its place. You can no more develop Christian character by service without prayer than you can make the thundering locomotive run along the track unless you feed its fires. I beseech you, steep your spirit in the letter of the Word of God, and then its spirit shall dominate your spirit. Give time to study it diligently. Begin no day without some verse, or chapter, or book—I care not which. You say this is a busy age. I know it! I am in the age, and of the age. Do you have to be at business by a certain hour every morning? How often do you get there without your breakfast? Not often, of course. You cannot work without food. Will you care for the body, and not for that spirit? That neglect means arrest of development. It is absolutely important that you begin the day with God's Word. Man's words will be crowding upon your soul all day. Prepare it, then, with the Word of God, that you may measure and estimate rightly the words of men, accepting or rejecting them according to their relation with God's great Word. Feed your soul upon the Word. It is a means of grace.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, in The Simple Things of the Christian Life.

Subjects for Discussion. 1. Great open-air services: addresses of Moses, Samuel, the prophets, Jesus, Paul. Open-air services today; Salvation Army addresses; the work of other churches.

2. How church members listen to the reading of the Word. Long services. All who could hear with understanding were present at this lengthy service. At what age should children attend church?

3. Great Bible Schools.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.

1. What does the name *Malachi* mean? 2. How does Mal. 1.8 indicate when it was written? 3. What was the purpose of the book? 4. What storehouse is meant in verse 10? 5. What is meant by "the book of remembrance," verse 16? 6. Do the wicked prosper today? 7. Are the righteous rewarded today? 8. What profit is there today in serving the Lord? 9. What does Prov. 3.9,10 say about giving? 10. What was Paul's counsel in regard to giving in 1 Cor. 16.1,2? 11. What was the law in reference to tithes? (Lev. 27.30-32; Num. 18.21-24). 12. How can a nation rob God, that is, withhold from him that which is his due? 13. Does a Christian who is a "slacker" rob God?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

Beginning the Lesson. In a home in England during the War where three soldiers were quartered, the seven-year-old daughter took the money which she had been saving, and bought three copies of John's Gospels, one for each soldier. Then she thought of the twenty-five dollars which her father had put in the bank for her on her seventh birthday. "Mother, how many soldiers are there in this town?" she asked. "Thousands, my dear," the mother replied wonderingly. "Mother, how many Gospels of St. John would twenty-five dollars buy?" the child questioned. "I would like to give all the soldiers one."

In the time of Nehemiah the Gospel of John had not been written, nor had Jesus lived his wonderful life on earth. But there was a part of our Old Testament Scriptures which was called the Book of the Law, and Ezra was as eager to bring this to the knowledge of the people as that little girl was to bring the knowledge of Christ to those soldiers. How did he do it? Describe that great Bible reading. What effect did the reading have upon the people? Why? What did Ezra say to them? Why?

The Reading Led to Action. There is a legend that St. Anthony once preached a sermon to the fishes. We are told that the fishes swam up to hear him, and with their heads above the water listened to him very attentively, but after the sermon was over

"The pikes went on piking,
And the eels went on eeling,"

just as before.

Similar is the effect of much attentive listening to sermons by men and women, boys and girls. Not so was it with Ezra's congregation that day before the water gate of Jerusalem. By their weeping they confessed and mourned over their sins of which the reading showed they had been guilty. And all the people said Amen to the reading, thereby agreeing to obey the Law in the future.

Amen. There is one curious Bible word which we hear whenever we go to church, a word which all Christian children repeat as often as they kneel down to their morning or evening prayer; and yet very few children understand it, and even older people seldom stop to think what it means. It is the word "Amen." We sing it after the last verse of a hymn, or we say it at the close of a prayer, by mere force of habit, but we hardly associate the word with any particular meaning of its own. It seems not much more than the flourish which some people make after they have signed their names.

Yet this word "Amen" has a very definite and serious meaning. It was originally an old Hebrew word, which signifies "So be it"—or, more exactly, "So shall it be." And when we sing it after a benediction, or repeat it at the end of a prayer, we are ratifying with our "Amen" all that went before it. We are praying, "Lord, let it be so"; or we are confessing our faith: "Lord, so shall it be."

To say "Amen" is one of the most ancient and most universal of Christian customs. Paul refers to the "Amen" which was uttered in the assembly of disciples after some one had offered up thanksgiving. And some early Christian writers describe the sound of this grand "Amen," and compare it to the rolling of thunder or the breaking of the waves of the sea. The primitive Church borrowed the response, with many customs, from the Jewish synagogue. The Jews considered that a common "Amen" of the many was necessary to ratify a prayer or a blessing pronounced by the one. Indeed, the Jewish rabbis, who were so precise about words and forms, attached no small importance to having

the "Amen" said in proper fashion. When it was repeated carelessly and without thought, they called it "an orphan Amen," and they declared, "Whosoever says an orphan Amen, his children shall be orphans." The rabbis declared again, "Whosoever says Amen hurriedly or shortly, his days shall be shortened." But, on the other hand, "Whosoever says Amen (*i.e.*, says it in spirit and in truth) to him the gates of Paradise are open."

Now, if we think a little, we may see that for a Christian to say "Amen" as it ought to be said, must be nothing less than an act of faith. When we say "Amen" let it be no vain repetition, but a childlike confession of faith in our Perfect Father. Let us say it with the heart and the understanding also, as setting our own seal to the praise, as invoking upon ourselves the benediction.—Bible Gleanings.

A Parable of the Unread Bible. One day a man who had been roaming about in a park for hours stopped to speak to the owner. "What a fine view you have from the top of the hill yonder!"

"Yes," answered he; "on a clear day you can see Mont Blanc and the Rhine from there."

The stranger laughed. "Not quite so far as that, but the view is very extensive and beautiful."

"You impudent fellow!" exclaimed the owner, "do you mean to contradict me? I tell you, Mont Blanc and the Rhine are quite visible."

"Have you seen them?" inquired the visitor.

"No," said he, "I have never been up the hill in my life, but it has been a saying of my ancestors for hundreds of years."

"Why not go to see for yourself?" asked the stranger.

"I couldn't do it," replied the owner. "There's so much undergrowth to get through, and the hill is steep and stony; but I am sure that the prospect is as I have said."

I think I need not say more to prove that this nobleman was eccentric. We might perhaps say that he was foolish. To own a good estate and not to enjoy it, to be proud and boastful about it and yet to be ignorant of its real beauties and usefulness, to fancy it contained things which it did not contain, to be so lazy as never to explore it, to brag of its fruit and yet to be content with just so much of it as chance visitors brought to him: all this was silly, and worse than silly.

But what has it to do with you? It is a parable of the UNREAD BIBLE.

To compare the Bible to a fine house and park is a very modest comparison indeed. The usefulness and the delight which are to be had by a real, thorough knowledge of the Bible are quite beyond my power to describe, but there are many people who are content to depend on what preachers and others bring them of Bible fruit, and will not take the trouble to look into it for themselves. They get poor food for their souls when they might have the best. They imagine that the Bible is dry, or that it is very mysterious and difficult. They declare that it is the divinest book in the world, but they won't read and study it for themselves. They fancy there are things in it which are not there, and they don't know the things which are there. They are as odd as the nobleman. They are even more foolish than he, for they starve their souls.

Read your Bible; ask questions about the things you do not understand; so you will be rich in the best treasure and enjoy the highest kind of pleasure.—Condensed from The Wonderful River, by John A. Hamilton.

Her Ambition. Many years ago an old white-haired grandmother came every day to a negro mission school, patiently picking out the letters and words until she learned to distinguish the word "Jesus." "I'se boun' to read de bressèd Bible froo, myself, befo' I dies," she said. "'Pears like I would'n wan' to go home an' tell him I neber tried to make out dat ar word he sent me."—World Wide.

The Transforming Power of the Bible. Augustine heard a voice saying *Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!* Take up and read, and his life was changed. Wycliffe gave England an open Bible, and England opened her heart to God. The marooned sailors on the Pitcairn Islands led a riotous and vicious life till one of their number found a forgotten Bible in a ship's chest, and then the transfiguration began which did not cease till that hell had been transformed into heaven. A much-thumbed Bengali version of St. John's Gospel is preserved at the Baptist Mission House. A native had obtained it, and was in the habit of gathering

his fellow villagers about him to read it to them. When he was dying he handed it on to a friend, who took his place. As a result of the simple reading of it in this way, when the missionary arrived there were twenty-eight people to be baptized.

Abeunt studia in mores, says Horace (Our studies pass into our conduct). And it is true that the nature of this most marvellous Book passes into the life of him who will study it. The bones of certain animals that are fed on madder turn red. He who inwardly digests the matter of this Book will find a fundamental transformation taking place in his life. So closely is the Bible associated with the spiritual life that it has been truly said: Either this Book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this Book.

Why is it the Bible has this transfiguring power, why is it that it has an influence greater, deeper, holier than any other book in the world? It is that the Bible is a Revelation. It is a progressive revelation culminating in the Person of Christ.

When we read the Bible and survey God's purpose ripening through time and at length in the fulness of time bringing forth Jesus the Christ—then we see him face to face. "But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." And it is the claim of the Bible, above all other books, that in it God does appear to the soul of man. And as it is true that the pure in heart shall see God, the converse is also true that they that see God shall be pure in heart.—Cuthbert McEvoy.

Tributes to the Power of the Word of God. I would not now exchange for any amount of money the acquaintance with the Bible that was drummed into me when a boy.—Eugene Field.

Every time I read you
Kills a sin,
Or lets a virtue in
To fight against it.—Izaak Walton.

I have read the Bible morning, noon and night, and have ever since been the happier and better man for such reading.—Edmund Burke.

We search the world for truth: we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower-fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read.—Whittier.

Of one thing I am convinced: do what we will, oppose it as we may, it is the Christian Bible that will sooner or later work the regeneration of our land.—A. Hindu Brahmin.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Understandest thou what thou readest?—Philip.

The sweet pleasure and satisfaction found in sitting down alone to read the Bible is evidence of being a Christian.—Mary Lyon.

My advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures—this is your certain interest.—Franklin.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XI. A Great Bible Class in the Days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many chapters are there in Malachi? 2. What is its position in the Bible? 3. Read Mal. 1.6-13; 2.1,4-12. 4. What does "Your words have been stout against me" mean? 5. What does "built up," verse 15, mean? 6. How did the widow of Zarephath find that giving brought great blessing? 7. Where in the Bible are we told what kind of giving the Lord loves? 8. Who said "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? 9. Who recorded this saying for us? (Acts 20.35). 10. What do we owe God? 11. Are we keeping back anything due him? 12. What does Malachi call such withholding? 13. What proportion of your spending money do you set aside for the church and missions and charity?

THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI

Golden Text

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. Malachi 3.7

LESSON Malachi 3.1 to 4.3 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 32.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Kings 17.7-23; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1.7-10; Ezekiel 2.1-7; Acts 20.35; 1 Corinthians 16.1,2; 2 Corinthians 8.1 to 9.15

MALACHI 3.7 From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough *to receive it.* 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee? 14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? 15 and now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape.

16 Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another; and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name. 17 And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, *even* mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18 Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE COMING OF THE LORD IN JUDGMENT, verses 1-6. "To those who believe in a God who governs human thought, and prepares his own way before his face, it will not be hard to believe that this element in prophecy is, indeed, a coming event casting its shadow before. The stretching out of human hands in hope and desire, and the coming of the Unspeakable Gift in the fulness of time, were parts of the same process. During the world's morning twilight of expectation God took many an elect soul up the watch tower with him, that he and they might look together at the kindling East and tell others the signs of promise that they saw upon the sky. And when Christ came, it was not hard for him to find in many psalms and prophecies things concerning himself" (J. M. E. Ross).

II. AN APPEAL, verses 7-12. Through many generations Judah had sinned, and now they were reaping the fruits of their sin. *Return unto me, keep my ordinances, and I will return unto you*, was the message that Malachi received from *Jehovah of hosts*. Compare Zech. 1.2-6. *Wherein shall we return?* In what respects have we not obeyed thee? the people question, being represented here as often throughout the Book of Malachi as answering back, instead of accepting reproof: see 1.2,6,7; 2.14,17; 3.8,13. "There may be some sins which we do not know about, and yet we are conscious that our lives are not right with God. A friend of mine started to row one day, and he took hold of the oars and tried to move the boat. It would not go. He pulled harder and harder,

and still the boat would not move. He jerked out one oar and tried to push the boat off. Still it would not leave the wharf. Finally he looked down and saw a rope holding the boat beneath the water. So it is here and there with people—some secret strand, it may be of pride, of indifference, of selfishness, is binding us to the shore. May we not with sincerity and earnestness offer this prayer: 'Search me, O God'—there will then be searching indeed—'and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me—and then lead me in the way everlasting' " (Mott).

Will a man rob God?—a question used for the sake of emphasis, calling for an emphatic negative answer. *Yet ye rob me,* as shown in Mal. 1.6-14. Again the people question, *Wherein have we robbed thee?* And the answer is, *In tithes and offerings.* See Lev. 27.30-32; Num. 18.21-24. "In withholding these they robbed God, and to this, their crime, are due the locusts and bad seasons which have affected them. In our temptation to see in this a purely legal spirit, let us remember that the neglect to pay the tithes was due to a religious cause, unbelief in Jehovah, and that the return to belief in him could not, therefore, be shown in a more practical way than by the payment of tithes" (George Adam Smith). *Ye are cursed with the curse:* the curse which had been threatened, Mal. 2.2; Dt. 28.15-68; Lev. 26.14-33, and verse 11 of our lesson.

Bring ye the whole tithe, the Lord's full share, *into the storehouse,* 2 Cor. 31.11, *that there may be food in my house.* "The store-house may have been the 'great chamber' or 'lean-to' surrounding the second temple on three sides, and consisting of three stories, each containing several rooms, which had been perverted from its original purpose as a receptacle of the tithes and offerings, and assigned by the high priest to Tobiah, but which Nehemiah had restored to its proper use again (Neh. 10.38; 13.5-9,12,13). It is not improbable that the 'chambers' which abutted to the height of three stories on the walls of Solomon's temple, were intended in like manner for storehouses (1 K. 6.5,6). In the great Reformation under Hezekiah such chambers were 'prepared,' either built or restored, in some part of the temple area, to receive the enormous influx of tithes and offerings (2 Ch. 31.11,12)" (Perowne). *And prove me now herewith,* test me, see that I am the rewarder of the good, see *if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.* The abundance promised, it is natural to infer from verses 11 and 12, was of rain. "The lattices of heaven are open, not to pour down, as of old, fiery destruction, but to make way for the gentle descent of God's blessing, which will more than fill every vessel set to receive it. This is the universal law, not always fulfilled in increase of outward goods, but in the better riches of communion and of large possession in God himself" (Maclaren). *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,* the locusts or other pests that devoured the grain: Joel 1.4; Amos 4.2. *Ye shall be a delightsome land:* see Isa. 62.4.

II. COMPLAINTS, verses 13-15. *Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah.* The word translated *stout* is literally *strong.* "Compare the colloquial 'to be hard on a person.' These words contain a serious accusation, which casts reflections on the character of Jehovah" (Eiselen). *Ye have said, It is vain,* futile, useless, *to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his charge?* See Isa. 58.3; Ps. 73.13. *And that we have walked mournfully* (or, *in mourning apparel,* RVm.) *before Jehovah of hosts?* They contrast their humble attitude with that of the *proud,* next verse. "When religion becomes a mere mourning apparel, put on for the sake of profit, there is nothing in it to create joy and strength" (Jordan). *We call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up,* they prosper, despite their wickedness: see Jer. 12.16,17. *They tempt,* challenge, *God and escape.* See Isa. 5.18,19.

IV. THE FAITHFUL FEW, verses 16-18. "The more the ungodly spake against God, the more the godly spake among themselves for God" (Pusey). The latter *spake one with another,* "nourishing their faith by believing speech with the like-minded." *Jehovah heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah.* See Light from Oriental Life. *And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make. In that day when I make up my jewels,* AV. The day is that of 3.1: see Dt. 7.6; 14.2; 26.18. "There are very few alterations in the Revised Version which give us a keener pang than this one. The time-worn phrase 'When I make up my jewels' has been so precious it seems almost sacrilege to touch it. But, except for the hallowed associations of the Authorized

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J. J. Tissot

MALACHI

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Malachi 3. 7.

Version, the Revised Version is equally precious. The word *segullah* is one of the most endearing terms in the Hebrew language. Its *locus classicus* is to be found in 1 Ch. 29.3, where we find that David had prepared for the temple three thousand talents of gold and seven thousand talents of silver; but over and above this, David had a *segullah*, a private treasure of his own of gold and silver, and this he was willing to dedicate for the same purpose. That part of a man's possessions, then, which he values most of all is his *segullah*. The word occurs in Ex. 19.5: 'If ye will obey . . . ye shall be to me a *segullah* above all peoples,' Dt. 7.6, 'Jehovah has chosen thee to be a *segullah* to himself,' and in the passage before us, the Lord says, 'In the day that I do make—that day, "the day of the Lord," "the unique day" so often mentioned in the prophets—they shall be mine, a peculiar treasure'" (J. F. Marshall). *And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then,* in that day, you who have been complaining because of the prosperity of the wicked, *shall return and discern between* the fate of *the righteous* and the wicked, between him *that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings, verse "The most barbarous natives, and the heathen Greeks and Romans, out of a principle of religion common to all men, have often dedicated their tithes to their gods. Some have made it a standing obligation. Laertius says that when Pisistratus, tyrant at Athens, wrote to Solon to persuade him to return to Athens, he told him that 'Everyone there pays the tithe of his goods for the offering of sacrifices to the gods.' Pliny says that the Arabian merchants who traded in spices dared not sell any till they had paid the tithe to their god Sabis. And Plutarch, in more places than one, mentions a custom of the Romans of offering to Hercules the tithe of what they took from their enemies."

A book of remembrance, verse 16. You remember that when Mordecai revealed the plot against the life of King Ahasuerus, his service was recorded, and later, when the book, or rather roll, was read by the king, Mordecai was rewarded by that triumphal procession which Haman was forced to prepare for him. A special roll was kept at the Persian court on which the names of "royal benefactors" were recorded, and their good deeds were always rewarded. "It is a mistake, however, to suppose that they were always rewarded at once," Canon Rawlinson says: "Themistocles was inscribed on the list in B. C. 480, but did not obtain a reward till B. C. 465. Other benefactors waited for months, or perhaps years, before they were recompensed."

The prophet's conception of a book of remembrance being written *before the Lord,* that is, by his royal command, this very human picture, is a natural one from the custom of the Persian court, and well expresses his beautiful thought that no one who does the will of the Lord is forgotten by him. The same figure is used in Ex. 17.14; 32.32; Dan. 7.10; Lk. 10.20; Rev. 20.12.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we heard about the backslidings of the people of Judah? In Ezekiel's vision of the Divine glory, what was said about the sins of the people?

The Book of Malachi. The word "Malachi" means "my messenger"; it was probably given as a title to the book because of its use in this first verse of our lesson, 3.1.

From the tenth verse of our lesson we know that the temple had been rebuilt, and therefore that the prophecies recorded in the Book of Malachi must have been written after that event. The evils rebuked are the same as those with which Nehemiah and Ezra had to contend, and the prophecies were evidently uttered in connection with their reforms. Nehemiah had gone back to the Persian court and again returned to Jerusalem. The priests had become neglectful of their duties and the people were negligent in paying tithes and in keeping the Sabbath, and were guilty of oppressing the poor and of putting away their Jewish wives to marry heathen wives; moreover, they were thinking that right conduct did not "pay." The writer of Malachi gives them a needed rebuke.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT GIVING

Beginning the Lesson. What were the chief characteristics of the Pharisees in the New Testament? A rich young ruler came to Jesus one day inquiring what more he must do to be saved: what did he say in regard to his keeping of the law? He was confident that he had done all the law required. The Pharisees were satisfied that they were very religious; they thought of religion as a matter of mere outward observance. There was the beginning of that spirit in the people after the exile. As far as they knew they were doing all that the Law required. The prophet Malachi recognized that spirit: how is it shown in our lesson text? He bids them return to God, and they answer, "Wherein shall we return?" He tells them that they have robbed God, and they say, "Wherein have we robbed him?" "Your words have been stout against the Lord," the prophet cried, and "What have we spoken against him?" is their retort. Their answer to each indictment is "Not guilty."

What do we know about Malachi the prophet? About the Book of Malachi?

Does it "Pay" to Give to the Lord? In our text there is the statement of the old problem, the problem that reappears in every generation, the problem that perplexes men today. Those who honestly try to serve God in life have frequently to deny themselves many pleasant things, and do not seem to be especially favored. On the other hand, those who care nothing for God, and trample his laws under foot in their reach after power and pleasure, frequently get what they desire, and draw upon their heads no conspicuous punishment. Oftentimes wickedness is the very path and instrument by which success is achieved. The good man has scruples which tie his hands before an opportunity on which the man of easy conscience without hesitation leaps, and rides gayly along the highway to wealth and power.

Let us study the laws of things. God rules on this earth as well as in heaven. He rewards every man according to his work. If we work for wealth, eagerly, tirelessly, if we organize our work wisely, and observe the laws which govern the making of money, we shall get wealth. If we are willing and able to pay the price, we can buy anything we choose in the market of the world. But we must pay the price, and we must not expect any other thing than that which we purchase. It is not always a shameful price. The energy and skill and persistent purpose and plodding industry, which the world values so highly, and rewards so richly, are virtues which enter into the make-up of all manly character. That we have failed to win the world's prizes is not necessarily a proof of our goodness. It may be simply a proof of our feebleness.

But it is a mistake to imagine that wickedness only can thrive on this earth. If we look closely at the world, if we watch the history of men,—the slow, steady swing of events marching to their conclusion,—we shall see that even this secular life is organized in the interests of virtue. In the long run, it recognizes goodness, brings but its fairest crowns for its brows, pays it for its service with its richest coin. It may not be wealth or official honors; but surely the love and respect and gratitude of men count for something in the estimates of a prosperous life.

These, however, are not the rewards of righteousness, even on this earth. The men who have toiled for it the most keenly, in whose life it has shone forth in the noblest and most resplendent types, have scorned the applause of the world. They were not working for that. It was the sharp hunger in their souls that kept them at their arduous toil. And the moral power into which they grew was itself its own reward. Though the world were silent, and swept by them on its eager quests, they were content. They carried in their souls an ineffable peace, a calm, deep joy, a vision of things invisible, a grasp of the eternal which lifted them above the world, and cheapened its treasures and its honors.

Does this seem an heroic rôle, fit only for the saints of history? There is not a man or woman today, however narrow or obscure his lot, but may live this life, and walk with God in the daily paths of his appointed toil. Only in this way can we strike the highest notes in our nature. Only in this way can we realize the highest values of the little space of life that is given us between the cradle and the grave.

What profit is it to serve God? I have told you some of the profit, not all of it. This life does not end with the grave. It stretches on into distances and

experiences that we cannot measure. You must wait till the end for the full adjustment of values. This is the answer that Malachi makes to the question touching the profit of goodness in Mal. 3.16-18.—Condensed from Interpretations of Life and Religion, by W. W. Battershall.

What the Bible Teaches about Giving. The practice of paying tithes is very ancient. Early in the Book of Genesis we find (14.20) that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem, as his due for his expedition against Chedorlaomer, and this was a token that he owed his victory to God. We next hear about giving a tithe to the Lord in the story of Jacob, when he vowed "Of all thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. 28.22). The ancient Hebrews kept the law of tithing as recorded in Leviticus 27.30,32: and all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's: it is holy unto Jehovah. And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto Jehovah. A tithe was paid to the Levites for their maintenance (Num. 18.21,24) and a second tithe for the feasts and sacrifices, first at the place of the ark, the tabernacle, and then at the temple. Every third year a tithe was taken for sacrifices for the poor (Dt. 14.28,29), but whether this was in addition to, or instead of, that for the temple is uncertain. The paying of tithes was an honoring of God:

> Honor Jehovah with thy substance,
> And with the first fruits of all thine increase.—Prov. 3.9.

The New Testament sets forth the principle of *stewardship* in place of tithing. All that we have is the gift of God—every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (Jas. 1.17)—and it is to be administered according to the law of love—according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Pet. 4.10. "The most obvious lesson in all Christ's teaching," as Henry Drummond expressed it, is that there is no happiness in having and getting any thing, but only in giving. He taught the principle of stewardship, and the standard he laid down in these words, *To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.* Our giving must not be left to selfishness, nor yet to chance appeals, to moods, to caprice. There must be systematic giving.

"Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store," was Paul's method when raising the collection for the poor of Jerusalem. The putting aside was not to be left to the last day. "Giving God the first tenth of all that comes to us is safer trusteeship than giving him the last," declares Dr. Robert E. Speer. And the amount for each one was to be determined *as he may prosper*, or as the Authorized Version reads, *as God hath prospered him.* Some Christians set a standard in early life and never raise it as they are prospered. Wesley early set a standard and never lowered it: when his income was thirty pounds, he lived on twenty-eight and gave two; when it increased to sixty pounds and then to one hundred and twenty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight and gave the remainder.

What about Our Stewardship? Do we rob God by withholding our money or talent or time from his service? The members of the Mormon Church are strictly required to give one-tenth of their income to the spread of their faith. How much of his income does the average Christian give for the spread of Christianity? Do you know what proportion of your income you are giving to good causes? The amount is impressed upon you once a year when you make out your income tax returns, but do you know what proportion it bears to your net receipts? Are you proud of the figures?

During the year you have met many appeals. Was it your impression that you had been giving more liberally than your tax return indicates? There is a practice observed by large corporations, such as railroads, of dating jobs. Somewhere on the exterior of the railroad station, for instance, will be found the date when it was last painted. Dates are impressive. They are facts which cannot be disputed. Let us date our giving. The World's Sunday School Association send its supporters cards with this heading, "To be filled out and retained," and below are the dates when pledges are due. This is helpful, but the cards can easily be put aside and forgotten. My publishers send broadcast each month a card with a dotted line an inch below the top. "Fold on the line and put this flap in a pigeon-hole of your desk," is the instruction. If you follow the advice and have constantly before your eyes the information about

books advertised on the lower part of the card, you will not forget your opportunity of possessing them.

If every one would keep a long card in some place where he could always see it and on it write the amount and date of all his giving, the list would never be as meager as is often the case. The Jew of Old Testament times was required by law to give a tenth of his increase, but the Christian is left free by his Master to give all that his heart prompts him to give. "Our Father has so much confidence in us," writes Dr. J. H. Jowett, "that he makes no hard, arbitrary rule for Christian giving, but leaves it to the filial love and loyalty of his children to determine how much of their possessions they will offer to relieve the pains and sorrows of the world."

Are you not less given to robbing God of your money than you were before the war? Has it not become easier for you to give to good causes? Did not your purses open more readily last year for the starving children in Central Europe and the starving people in China than they did before the war for the earthquake sufferers in Italy? If you cannot answer "Yes" to these questions, then you have sadly missed some lessons of the war which were meant for you. Multitudes of men and women discovered in the war a new power in themselves, the power of giving liberally, unstintedly, yes, of giving even until it hurt. "Not since the early Christian centuries has giving been so general and on so generous a scale."

Do We Rob God of our Time? My little children were playing with their Noah's ark. I noticed that they used all the good whole animals for the procession, and the animal with the broken leg was used for the sacrifice, because it could not march in the procession anyway, and so might just as well be offered on the altar. I thought that is just the way it is with grown folks. We keep the best for the procession—the whole days of time and our most precious gifts, and then we put on the altar the broken bits which are really worth nothing elsewhere, and so can be used here to fill out the program, and salve our consciences.—Maud Ballington Booth.

For Discussion. 1. The Messianic Prophecies. See page XLV of the One Volume Commentary.

2. One more revival, only one more is needed—the revival of Christian stewardship, the consecration of the money power to God. When that revival comes the Kingdom of God will come in a day.—Horace Bushnell. May not one of us, but all of us, see the shadow of the Cross on our check books.—Samuel M. Zwemer.

3. How to make the stingy generous.

4. The religious future of the Jews. The possible gradual absorption of Judaism into Christianity. See The Christian Century, Feb. 3, 1921.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHAT WE SHOULD GIVE TO GOD

Beginning the Lesson. A famous English preacher was addressing all the Sunday-schools of his city. The church was so crowded that one class had to sit on the pulpit stairs, and because no room could be found for three young boys they were taken into the pulpit. The minister began his sermon by comparing the Bible to a tree with sixty-six branches; each chapter in the book was a twig of some branch, he said, and each verse was a leaf of some twig. "My text is on the 39th branch, the 3d twig and the 17th leaf: try to find it for me," he said. Can any of *you* tell at once where it is? One of those three boys who were behind the preacher immediately stood up and said, "Malachi 3d and 17." "Right, my boy," said the preacher; "now take my place and read it out." Then the lad read in a clear voice: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." "Well done, my boy. I hope that one day you will be a minister," the preacher said. And he did become a great minister, and his name, Henry Drummond, is known to all the world.

The Message of Malachi. Let two pupils read the following as a dialogue between Malachi, who speaks for Jehovah, and the people of Judah.

"From time immemorial you have broken my laws, but if you will turn about and keep them I will pardon you and grant you my favor," saith the Lord. But you say in answer, "In what way have we failed to keep thy laws? Surely

no one will rob God!" "Yet you have robbed me," returns Jehovah. "Wherein?" "In tithes and offerings. You, and your whole nation, are suffering the penalty for having robbed me. Bring the whole tithe that is due for the maintenance of my house, and see what a blessing shall be yours: the locusts shall not destroy your harvests nor shall the vine fail to yield for you its fruits. And all nations shall call you happy, a delightsome land."

"You have spoken harsh words against me," the Lord further declares. "What have we said against thee?" you question. "'There is no profit in serving God,' you say: 'What reward have we received for keeping his laws and for walking mournfully in his ways? The proud are the happy ones; yes, it's the wicked who prosper; they challenge God and escape.'"

Then those who feared the Lord encouraged one another, and their names were recorded in God's Book of Remembrance. "They shall be mine, even my own," saith the Lord. "In that day when I appear, I shall spare them: then you will discern the difference between the rewards of the righteous and of the wicked, of those who serve me and of those who do not serve me; for the wicked shall be destroyed, root and branch, while the righteous shall be exalted for ever."

We Owe God Gratitude. We read an amusing but quite suggestive incident the other day. It was related that a gentleman was recently standing in front of the Equitable Building, in New York City, when he happened to notice a scrap of paper on the floor. He picked it up and gasped for breath. It was a certificate of deposit for over $18,000. "Some one must be out of his head with anxiety," thought the gentleman, and he took a great deal of pains to tell all his friends so that the news might get to the owner as soon as possible. Sure enough, by and by, there came into his office a little man in a hurry. The gentleman who had found the certificate handed over the paper with a smile, expecting some expression of thanks. Instead to his astonishment, he met with the rebuke, "Why didn't you take this to the bank? You have caused me a lot of trouble!" We receive all the bounties of life in that spirit. After all, is that not the way in which a great many of us treat the Lord?—G. B. Hallock.

We Owe God Service. There is the God people generally believe in—a God who has to serve them (sometimes in a very refined way, perhaps, by merely giving them peace of mind). This God does not exist. But the God whom people forget—the God whom we all have to serve—does exist and is the prime cause of our existence and of all that we perceive.—Tolstoy.

We Owe God Tithes. Why? God is the owner of all things, is he not? Read Psalm 24.1; Haggai 2.8; Ezekiel 18.4. In his Word it is expressly taught that we are only the stewards of our possessions. Read Proverbs 3.9; Mt. 6.21; 19.21; Acts 20.35; 1 Cor. 16.2.

Dr. A. J. Gordon was the pastor of a church in Boston renowned for its gifts to missions. Toward the close of his ministry he said: "I am tempted never to beg a cent for God again, but rather to spend my energies on getting Christians spiritualized, assured that they will become liberalized." In an article about "God's Tenth" he quoted this story:—

I knew a widow of limited means who was remarkable for her liberality to benevolent objects. But a sad change came into her life by an unexpected legacy which made her wealthy, and then her contributions began to fall below the amount of her straitened finances. Once she volunteered; now she only gives when importuned, and then it is as meager as if the fountains of gratitude had dried up. Once when asked by her pastor to help a cause dear to her heart in her comparative poverty, and to which she gave five dollars then, now she proffered twenty-five cents. Her pastor called her attention to the surprising and ominous change. "Ah!" she said, "when day by day I looked to God for my bread, I had enough to spare: now I have to look to my ample income, and I am all the time haunted with the fear of losing it and coming to want. I had the guinea heart when I had the shilling means; now I have the guinea means and the shilling heart." It is a fearful risk to heart and soul, to become suddenly rich. This is one of the reasons why God lets many of his children acquire wealth so slowly, so that it may not be a snare to them, may not chill their benevolence; that, when wealth comes, the fever of ambitious grasping may be cooled, and that benevolence may overtake avarice.

When John Wanamaker Learned the Joy of Giving. He was a poor boy of sixteen working in his father's small brickyard in Philadelphia. He at-

tended the church on Broad Street near the City Hall of which Dr. John Chambers was the pastor, and heard him more than once call attention from the pulpit to the long neglected brick pavement around the church. When at last the pastor pathetically described his grief over the shameful neglect, the heart of the young man in a rear pew was stirred.

"I'll see whether I can get it done," he resolved. It took only a few days of soliciting among the wealthy brickmakers to secure enough material, and by his own generous contribution with that of others he paid for laying them. Before the next Sunday the firm, new pavement made the church and all its surroundings look remarkably improved.

John went early that Sunday and hid behind a projecting corner to see how Dr. Chambers would view his work. With his head bowed, thinking of his morning message, the grand old man did not see the pavement until he actually stepped upon it. Then he excitedly stepped hard, as if to assure himself that it was real; he walked half way to the corner and back over it and then stood with a beaming face and inspected it the entire length. Unconsciously John had fallen into step behind the preacher. Dr. Chambers suddenly turned, and seeing John behind him, shouted: *"You* had something to do with this, my boy! Thank you! Thank you, with all my heart!"

When Mr. Wanamaker, years afterward, told the story he added: "It was my first taste in giving to the Lord's cause. I had never known anything so satisfying and inspiring. Do you wonder that I kept on giving more and more as I became able to do so?"

Good Advice. Once upon a time a sixteen year old lad started forth to make his fortune, with all his earthly possessions tied up in a small bundle. He took passage on an Erie Canal boat and the captain, becoming interested in him, asked him what he could do to earn a living. "I can make soap and candles," he replied. "Someone will soon be a great soap-maker in New York," returned the captain, "and that someone may be you. Make an honest pound. Give your heart to the Lord, and give him his tenth of every dollar you make." The boy promised to follow his advice. He began to make soap, and to give away one tenth of what he earned. He prospered in business, and was soon giving two tenths, three tenths, five tenths. Before Mr. Colgate died, for he was the lad we are talking about, he gave all his income to God's cause.

Do you Know how Much you Give? Is it not the case that most people keep no account whatever of what they give? Do not most of those who keep no account imagine that they have given more than they have really given? And would not most of them wish to give more? It would almost seem as though a good many people mixed up in their minds the number of appeals made to them to give, with the number of times they have given. Some may be in the plight of Miss Midgeon in The Victory of Mary Christopher, and for much the same reason. "A tenth indeed!" she said. "I think Mr. Randolph is perfectly morbid on the subject. Of course, I do not keep an account of how much I give; I'm not such a Pharisee as that; but I'm sure it is much more than a tenth. Indeed, I should not be surprised if I gave almost a twentieth!"—David McConaughy, in Money the Acid Test.

A Great Giver. It is not the wealthy only who can help. I know of one poor girl who has worked as a stenographer for years in a big city. She offered to go to the foreign field and was rejected on account of her health. Since then she has been saving and sending her money, supporting native workers at $30 each a year. There is a community in North India where there are more than a thousand souls that have been brought to Christ solely through native workers supported by this one frail girl. A thousand who have passed from darkness into his marvelous light, because one girl cared! How many are in the light because of what you have done?—Sherwood Eddy.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. He who cannot give God a tithe of his money will find it hard to give him all his life.—Robert E. Speer.

God's goodness hath been great to thee:
Let never day nor night unhallowed pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.—Shakespeare.

Almighty God, cause me to throw open the windows of my life, that I may look always away from myself and behold the need of the world.—Sill.

Note-Book Work. XII. The Message of Malachi.

REVIEW: THE EXILE AND THE RESTORATION

Golden Text

**Jehovah hath done great things for us;
Whereof we are glad. Psalm 126.3**

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 66.1-5, 16-20

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LESSONS FROM THE EXILE AND RETURN

I. Before the destruction of Jerusalem the prophet Ezekiel went into exile with the first deportation, and five years afterwards he was called to his prophetic office. It was a severe arraignment of the children of Israel that he was told to make in the name of the Lord. Well might he have hesitated to denounce the people so scathingly. But he had been made a watchman unto the house of Israel, and if he had failed to deliver his God-given message, then would he have been "blood guilty," the blood of the wicked who died in their iniquity would have been required at his hand.

Ezekiel lived up to his responsibility. Do we live up to ours? It is one thing to have convictions, but quite another thing to have the courage of convictions. A responsibility calls for a response. Not to respond to the responsibility that rightfully belongs to us in cowardly and base. "When we disavow being keeper to our brother we're a Cain," cries George Eliot.

If you are sure that you can foresee what will happen if certain practices continue, and if you repress the impulse to warn, what may be your reason? If you frequently repress such an impulse will you continue to feel it? Why? If then evil things happen, what is your responsibility? What about people who say, "Just as I expected": are they better or worse than those who say, "I told you so"?

II. It is an old device of story writers to have a civilized captive of barbarians remember in the nick of time about an eclipse of the sun. Are the barbarians justified in reverencing him as a prophet?

Does everyone who feels like prophesying really have a message from God to deliver? What is a false prophet? Do you think he knows that he is false? What about the older people who prophesy disaster because ways are changing? Are they true prophets? How do you know?

Does any one who prophesies today preface his prophecy with "Thus saith the Lord"? Might he? Why? Why not?

III. What is our saying about experience being a dear school? Whose experience is here meant? Does one often profit by the experience of others? What king of Babylon failed to profit by the experience of his predecessor? "To be untrue to knowledge is the beginning of defection. To act as though God had never spoken, and as though we had never heard his voice, is simply to court disaster. Every increase of intelligent apprehension regarding Divine requirement means increased responsibility. It is the servant who knows his Lord's will, and does it not, who is beaten with many stripes. Every day is a judgment day, when we are weighed in invisible balances—our attainments measured by our opportunities, and our obedience tested by our privilege. And herein is the iron of the situation: that the Divine justice can never be called in question. Because we have known his commands, we are utterly speechless when his condemnation is declared."

IV. How did Belgium prove that she set honor above life? What other nations have met triumphantly a tragic test? What instances of individual triumph in a time of testing can you cite? Is there a better story than that of Daniel before his open window?

Back in the early days of Hebrew history we read that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, and that was the beginning of his downfall. He faced the wrong way. The windows of Daniel's chamber were open toward Jerusalem. He faced the right way. In these two notes of direction we find a characterization of these two men. The trend of Daniel's life was toward Jerusalem and God.

When the time of testing came to Daniel and merely by avoiding his customary practice of prayer he might have escaped the sentence of death, he practically said: I steadfastly believe that my God is able to deliver me, but if not—be it known unto thee, O King, that I will not fail in my allegiance to him.

V. The captivity was God's training school, where the exiles were given an opportunity to lament their rebelliousness and recognize their dependence upon him. Jeremiah had prophesied that after seventy years were accomplished God would visit and perform his good word toward them, in causing them to return to their home. The first opportunity for return from exile came in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia. Jehovah stirred up the spirit of this king to make a proclamation permitting any who wished to go back and build the house of Jehovah.

Does God stir up the hearts of men today to do his will? Does he make his agents men who are not knowingly working his will? Cite instances.

VI. The chief desire of returning exiles was to rebuild the temple and re-establish their ancient worship. It was a great day when the foundation of the temple was laid, vocal and instrumental music formed part of the ceremony, and joy reigned supreme. But while there was joy in all hearts, conflicting emotions filled the hearts of the old men who had known the glorious temple of Solomon. They were weeping as well as rejoicing. Life has many such scenes, when the bitter mingles with the sweet. One of Tennyson's odes refers to a wedding as "the white funeral of the single life." The foundation laying of that second temple in the midst of ruin and desolation was to the old men a "white funeral" of all the glories of the past.

VII. There is one book in the Bible which, strangely, contains no mention of God: what is the book? What is the nature of the book? What is the chief virtue portrayed by the heroine? By her uncle? What characteristics has the villain of the story? Why is the book held in such great esteem by the Jews? What value has it for us?

VIII. Should missionaries, strong in their reliance upon God, refuse the help of their governments in times of peril? Should men and women trust in God's power to heal and not seek the physician's aid in sickness? "Trust in God and keep your powder dry": have Cromwell's words an abiding force? How did Ezra put God's care to a test? How do you justify him?

IX. When President Harding was a Senator he said one day to a friend: "I believe in prayer. I believe in prayer in the closet, for there one faces God alone. I can understand how those prophets of old, in their anxiety, problems, perturbations, and perplexities, found courage when they gave their hearts to the Great Omnipotent in prayer."

Things were not going well with the little Jewish colony in Judah. They were in great affliction and reproach, the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof were burned with fire. When this sad news reached the ears of Nehemiah in the city of Artaxerxes in the valley of the Euphrates he gave himself up to grief, but he also grieved to a purpose. He made up his mind to go to their relief. But he was cup-bearer to the king—would the king allow him to leave? His prayer that God would further him in his purpose gave him courage to make his request, which was quickly granted.

X. Nehemiah came to Jerusalem and at once began the work of rebuilding the walls. And he carried the work through to completion, despite much opposition and intrigue. What were the difficulties he had to meet, and how did he win out?

Crises will come: how shall we meet them? Shall we meet them with prayer alone, and then idly await the result? Shall we meet them with earnest effort alone, and then expect to come off victor? Or shall we both pray and watch, cry to God for help and also exercise all the foresight and powers that God has given us? "It is curious to see how the space clears around a man of decisive spirit and leaves him room and freedom": curious but most natural.

XI. What great assembly was held after Jerusalem was fortified, and for what purpose? How was the great Bible reading conducted? In our church schools is the Bible sufficiently explained? Is it in our church services? Why should one study the Bible? Do most Christians spend as much time reading the Bible as they do in reading the newspapers? "From the standpoint of common trade, have we any right to expect returns?" questions Dr. Jowett, deploring the brief time and thought given to the Word of God. "I enter a most

earnest plea," said Roosevelt, "that in our hurried and rather bustling life of today we do not lose the hold that our forefathers had on the Bible. I wish to see Bible study as much a matter of course in the secular college as in the theological seminary."

XII. Is Cinderella a parable? What does it teach? Cite modern novels which teach the same lesson. Is a novelist doing the best work who always has the self-sacrificing heroine rewarded by the rich hero? What is a wiser dénouement? If you wrote the scenarios for the motion pictures how would you reward virtue? How does the Old Testament constantly say virtue shall be rewarded? What did Malachi say? What did Christ say?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many centuries elapsed between the Old Testament and the New? 2. What was the world-power at the close of the Old Testament? 3. How did it come to an end? 4. What was the world-power at the beginning of the New Testament? 5. Who wrote the third Gospel? 6. Who was he? 7. He is mentioned by name only three times in the Bible: Col. 4.14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 7.11. What do we infer from the first reference? 8. What do the second and third references tell us? 9. Who built the temple which we hear about in the New Testament? 10. Why is the song of Zacharias called the Benedictus?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LEADERS IN THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

I. In the Arizona desert is a well fifty-five miles from any other water. For years travelers crossing the desert knew of its existence and sought to find it. Many failed because there was nothing on that featureless plain to tell them where it is. All around are scattered the bones of men whose lives might have been saved could they have reached that well. Finally the land with the well passed into the hands of a man who appreciated his responsibility in the matter. He planted a tall cottonwood pole and hung a lantern from it, which he has always kept burning. Were the former owners in any way responsible for the deaths of those men? How does this incident apply to our first lesson? What was the title given Ezekiel? How did he live up to it?

II. What other youth who like Ezekiel became a prophet of God was carried away as a captive? It was in the reign of Jehoiakim that Daniel was taken to Babylon. The Book of Daniel has several very interesting stories about him. In the court of Nebuchadnezzar he and three other youths were given an easy, luxurious life but they rebelled: why? With what result? How did the stand that Daniel then took test his character? Then came the time when Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which greatly troubled him. What did he require of his wise men in the matter? What did they answer? What did Daniel say was the dream? What did he say was the interpretation? Did it require courage on Daniel's part to tell it to the king?

III. Belshazzar, the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar, with his father ruled Babylon. Outside the city Cyrus, King of Persia, was encamped with a great army. For weeks the army had been there, but Belshazzar felt secure within the city walls. He gave a great feast one night, and used the sacred golden dishes and goblets taken from the temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Then suddenly in the midst of the noisy revelling a strange thing happened. What was it? The trembling king called upon his cleverest men to interpret those written words, but they could not. The queen suggested that Daniel be sent for. When Daniel came, what did he tell the king? How did that banquet end? What became of Daniel?

IV. A young man was taking photographs of bits of scenery in the Maine woods. He came upon a cavern between some rocks, and wondering what sort of picture he could get of the cave, he steadied his camera upon his knee, and took a "time exposure" of the semi-darkness within. Then he slowly departed. Several weeks later, on developing his picture, he was amazed and startled to see in the picture a huge Canadian lynx, his back arched and his fur bristling, standing within springing distance of the spot where he himself had stood without thought of possible danger. Could he not have thankfully repeated a verse from our fourth lesson—My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me? What story does this verse recall?

V. Who was Cyrus? What decree did he make? Why did he make it? Who

accepted the privilege? Who helped them? This was the first return from exile. Why had the Israelites become exiles? What had they learned in captivity? Why was it best for some of them to return to Judah? What was God's plan for them?

VI. At the Convention held in 1787 to frame our Constitution, Benjamin Franklin said: "The longer I live the more convincing proof I see that God governs in the affairs of man. And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that 'except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this, and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall proceed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

These words of Franklin spoken when the foundations of our great nation were being laid recall the story of the laying of the foundation of the second temple. What was the ceremony?

VII. The Book of Ezra shows what great things God did for the returned exiles. The Book of Esther shows how he cared for some of the children of Israel who remained in exile. It was in the reign of Xerxes that Esther, his queen, proved herself loyal to her people and saved them from a great disaster. By what other name is Xerxes called in the Book of Esther? What is the story?

VIII. The first glow of the return from exile passed, the poetry had become sober prose, and the long, hard work of rebuilding and re-establishing the former worship and manner of living required the utmost patience and perseverance. It required, too, strong leaders at the helm. Then came Ezra, the man of affairs, valiant and capable, with reinforcements of men and treasures. Tell the story of his coming.

IX.

All as God wills who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all our needs
Than all my prayers have told.

So sings our poet Whittier. If God knows our needs, why do we tell them to him in prayer? Nehemiah did so in the long ago: what was his need? What was his prayer? What was the effect of the prayer upon himself? How was it answered? Why was it God's will that it should be granted?

X. "We did that well, didn't we, sir?" observed an organ-blower as he wiped his perspiring brow at the close of a performance in the days before electric power superseded muscle. "We!" exclaimed the organist, much affronted. "You are only the blower: *I* produce the music!" The next time the organist was to play, not a note came from the keyboard. Looking round the organ he found the smiling blower who greeted him in a loud whisper with: "Say, shall it be *we?*"

It was "we" in the days when Nehemiah labored with his compatriots in building the walls about Jerusalem. Who were the helpers? To whom was the credit for the work due? How did Nehemiah show himself a great leader?

XI. A year before his death Lincoln said to a friend: "I am profitably engaged reading the Bible. Try to comprehend as much as possible of this book with your mind, and accept the rest with faith, and you will live and die a better man." This is what the people in Judah did after their city was made secure by its walls. Who was their leader in this Bible study? What part of our Bible did they have? What did they call it? How did the reading affect them? How did Ezra encourage them?

XII. Beautifully has Dr. Maclaren said that as surely as every leaf that grows is mainly water which the plant has received from the clouds, and carbon which it has obtained from the atmosphere, so surely will all our good be mainly drawn from heaven and heaven's gifts. What do we not owe the Great Giver! What does Malachi say that we especially owe him? Of what did he accuse the people of Judah? How do we sometimes rob God? How did Malachi appeal to the people? What did he say about a "book of remembrance"?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. From how many books of the Bible have we had lessons this year? 2. What has the history covered? 3. How many years are passed by in silence between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New? 4. How does Matthew begin his record of the life of Christ? 5. Mark? 6. John? 7. Luke?

THE RIVER JORDAN. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

FOURTH QUARTER

JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR: STUDIES IN LUKE

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

LESSON I—OCTOBER 1

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Golden Text

He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink. Luke 1.15

LESSON Luke 1 DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 1.68-79

REFERENCE MATERIAL Isaiah 40.3-5; Malachi 4.4-6

LUKE 1.8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw *him,* and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient *to walk* in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared *for him.* 18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. 20 And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak,

until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. 21 And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE PREFACE TO LUKE'S GOSPEL, verses 1-4. Luke himself, he tells us, was a careful historian, who obtained his information from those who were eye witnesses of the events he records.

II. A RIGHTEOUS COUPLE, verses 5-7. In accordance with his purpose of recording events *in order,* Luke begins with the prophecy of the forerunner's birth. Herod the Great reigned in Judea from 37 to 4 B. C. There was in his days a priest named *Zacharias,* who was *of the course of Alijah,* the eighth in order of the twenty-four groups of priests established by David, each of which officiated for a week in the temple services in regular rotation. His wife *Elisabeth* was also of priestly descent. *They were both righteous before God,* and this is explained as meaning that they were faithful in the keeping of the commandments and ordinances of the Mosaic law. "Most of the priests who appear in the Gospels are heartless formalists, if not worse; but there were some in whose hearts the ancient fire burned. In his origin, as in himself, John the Baptist represented the consummate flower of Judaism" (Maclaren).

III. THE PROPHECY OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, verses 8-13. When the time came for Zacharias's group to officiate in the temple, lots were cast, as was customary, to determine which priest should offer incense. The coveted duty fell to Zacharias. The altar of incense stood in the Holy Place in front of the curtain which shut off the Holy of Holies. On the right-hand stood the table of shew bread, and on the left, the golden candlestick. The burning of the incense was "the highest mediatorial act, the most solemn part of the day's service, symbolizing Israel's accepted prayers," and the priest who had this privilege was ever afterwards called "rich." The incense was burned morning and evening, Ex. 30.6-8: when Zacharias entered the Holy Place alone, *the whole multitude of the people were praying without,* in the temple court.

The ministry of angels is prominent in Luke's Gospel, and here in the beginning he records the appearance of an angel to Zacharias. "The sanctity of the function he was discharging may have made him more sensitive to the unseen world. This experience was not an hallucination, but had some objective reality; but what, we cannot say. Yet we cannot doubt that God has means of revelation beyond our common knowledge" (Garvie).

> "Dost smile at tale of seraph ministries?
> God sends the angels; thou must bring the eyes" (Langbridge).

Zacharias was *troubled:* compare Lk. 2.9; Mk. 16.5; Rev. 1.17. *Fear not,* were the words he heard, and then came the promise, because *his supplication* was *heard,* that he should have a son whom he should call *John.* Although Zacharias must have often prayed for a son, his prayer in the temple at this time must have been for the coming of the Messiah. *John* means "Jehovah's gift," or "God is gracious."

IV. THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF JOHN, verses 14-17. The son would bring *joy and gladness* not only to his father but to *many,* for he would be truly great—*great in the sight of the Lord.* He would be a Nazirite, one who drank *no wine nor strong drink.* See Num. 6.2-21; Mt. 3.4; Mk. 1.6. From birth he would be *filled with the Holy Spirit.* The Divine exaltation is here contrasted with the base excitement occasioned by strong drink. He would bring about the conversion of *many of the children of Israel.* And *in the spirit and power of Elijah* he would go *before his face,* "before God, who comes to the people in the Messiah," to turn the *hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just.* "'The fathers' are the patriarchs and prophets of Israel, 'the children' are their degenerate descendants who have alienated the heart of 'their fathers' by their disobedience to their godly precepts. The preaching of John will turn the heart of the children to imitate their just (i.e., pious) ancestors, and thus the heart of these ancestors, now alienated,

PALESTINE
IN THE
TIME OF CHRIST
0 5 10 20 30 40
SCALE OF MILES
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
Ladder of Tyre
PHŒNICIA
Lebanon
Anti-Lebanon
Mt. Hermon
Damascus
ITUREA
PANIAS
Dan
Cæsarea Philippi
ITUREA
TRACHONITIS
UPPER GALILEE
Waters of Merom (L. Huleh)
Seleucia
Ramah
Safed
Bethsaida
Julias
Chorazin
Capernaum
Ptolemais
Bay of Acre
GALILEE
Magdala
Sea of Galilee
Cerasa
Kurn Hattin
Cana
Tiberias
Hippos
Gamala
AURANITIS
Bethlehem
Mt. Tabor
Nazareth
LOWER GALILEE
Tarichea
Abila
Gadara
Kanata
Edrei
Mt. Carmel
Plain of Esdraelon
R. Kishon
Nain
Megiddo
Jezreel
Scythopolis (Bethshan)
Bethabara
Cæsarea
Mt. Gilboa
DECAPOLIS
Pella
Dium
Salim
Aenon
SAMARIA
Samaria
Mt. Ebal
Shechem
Sychar
Jacob's Well
Jordan
Gerasa
Apollonia
Plain of Sharon
Mt. Gerizim
Antipatris
Phasaelis
Arimathea
Archelais(?)
Thamna
Gophna
Lydda
Ephraim
Bethel
Philadelphia
Jamnia
Ekron
Emmaus
Jericho
Emmaus(?)
Mt. of Olives
Jerusalem
Bethany
Kidron
Livias
Julias
Heshbon
Nebo
Ashdod
Azotus
Bethlehem
Herodium
Ashkelon
JUDEA
Callirrhoe
Eleutheropolis
Bethzur
Machaerus
Gaza
Hebron
Dibon
Masada
Beersheba
Wilderness of Judea
Rehoboth
THE GREAT SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PHILISTIA
PROVINCE OF JUDEA
IDUMEA
DEAD SEA
SALT SEA
MOAB
PERÆA
GILEAD
HEROD ANTIPAS
TETRARCHY OF PHILIP
R. Jabbok
R. Arnon
35°
36°
33°
32°
31°
C.S.H. & CO., N.Y.
Longitude East from Greenwich

will be turned to them in love and approbation" (Dummelow). By doing this, John would *make ready for the Lord a people prepared* for him. Compare Mal. 3.1.

V. THE PUNISHMENT OF DOUBT, verses 18-22. *Whereby shall I know this?* questioned Zacharias. He would have some sign in confirmation of the promise, which seemed to him too wonderful, for he and his wife were old. The sign should be granted, the angel declared, announcing that he was *Gabriel,* the messenger of God. The only mention of Gabriel in the Bible is here in the first chapter of Luke (again in the annunciation to Mary), and in Daniel 8.16 and 9.21. "In the Babylonian and Persian angelologies there are analogies to the seven archangels of the Jews, and the possibility of Jewish belief having been influenced by these must not be lost sight of" (Hastings' Dictionary). The sign should be appropriate as a punishment for his unbelief, he should be dumb until *those things shall come to pass.* Zacharias had stayed in the Holy Place longer than usual, and the people wondered at his delay. When he did appear and could not pronounce the customary benediction from the steps leading to the outer court (Num. 6.24), they *perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple.* The dumbness did not pass away, he *continued making signs unto them.* He remained until the end of the week while his "course" was officiating, and then returned to his home in the hill country.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They had no child, verse 7. "Wealth and sons are the ornaments of life," says the Koran. In Bagdad, it is said, a childless Jewess ties a rag about the cannon before the Governor's palace, saying: "O great gun, mighty gun, I wish a child, and if you will grant my wish I will make you a present when I untie this string."

They marvelled while he tarried, verse 21. The people were afraid that the officiating priest might be struck dead for omitting some formality (Lev. 16.13), hence the custom was for the priest to finish his ministry as quickly as possible. Once when Simon the Just delayed too long, the people became so anxious that they almost broke into the Holy Place, and afterwards they reproached him for his want of consideration for them.—One Volume Commentary.

A High Priest. From a Statue in the Museum of St. Anne, Jerusalem

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who built the first temple? How was it destroyed? Who built the second? When? Through what centuries did our lessons of the first three Quarters extend? Who were the rulers at the beginning? At the end? What was the spirit and power of Elijah?

Malachi—Luke. In Malachi we read this prophecy: "Behold, I send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple." Today, in the Gospel of Luke, we have another prophecy of the coming of that messenger who shall make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Between the two promises lie four hundred years of time, for it is now 6 B.C.

The Beginnings of the Four Gospels. Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy and birth of Jesus; Mark begins with the preaching of the Forerunner, John the Baptist; Luke devotes his first chapter to the preface, the foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus, the visit of Mary to Elisabeth and the "Magnificat," the naming of the Baptist, and the "Benedictus"; John passes directly from his introductory verses to the witness of John the Baptist concerning the baptism of Jesus.

Two Annunciations in the First Chapter of Luke. The announcement to

Zacharias of the birth of John (5-25), and that to Mary of the birth of Christ (26-38), offer suggestive points of contrast. The Forerunner is promised in the temple to an Aaronic priest, in the performance of his priestly intercessory office, and the promise is received with doubt, despite its joyful nature. The Christ is promised in a Galilean home, to a maiden of the family of David, in the simple circumstances of daily life, and the promise is received with beautiful faith, despite its disturbing mysteriousness. That faith, taking all on trust, is soon rewarded by unsought confirmation (39-45); and Mary bursts forth into her exultant song of confident praise (46-56). Unbelief receives its appropriate "sign," dumbness, till the obedience of faith proves doubt dispelled (57-66); then Zacharias, too, can sing his song of rejoicing over promises fulfilled (67-80).—J. M. Willoughby.

The Prophecy of Zacharias. Like Zacharias himself for some months, prophecy had been dumb for almost four hundred years, and when he finds his voice again and speaks, the prophetic word he utters is the first to be heard after that long time of silence. Naturally it has an Old Testament form. We are only at the threshold of the New Testament, and Zacharias, so to speak, has only just placed one foot upon it. He is really standing on Old Testament ground, and his manner of thought and of speech follows the Old Testament model. Indeed, we have here the effort to clothe the new Gospel in the old cloth, to contain the new wine in the old bottles. There is an evident struggle to express the gifts and blessings of the Gospel in the language of the Hebrew Scriptures, whose diction and ideas, however, were familiar to those to whom Zacharias spoke.

One such expression is "a horn of salvation." Of course, it is a figure of speech, and equally of course, it points back to the days when the Hebrews were mostly shepherds and cattlemen, their wealth consisting in flocks and herds. It was plain to them that the strength of such animals lay chiefly in their *horns*, as they actually experienced when handling a refractory ox or ram, or when one such "ran amuck," pushing its way through the encampment, overturning tents and anything in its way. And so at a very early time the word "horn" came to represent strength, power, might. "A horn of salvation" means a mighty salvation, a powerful and effectual salvation, a salvation that truly and completely *saves*.

Such is the salvation which Zacharias declares the Lord God to have raised up or to be about to raise up; and his prophecy has been fulfilled, for when there was born in the city of David, of the house of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord, there was born a Savior strong to save and mighty to deliver.—The Lutheran.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The home of Zacharias was in the hill country south of Jerusalem, probably in the neighborhood of Hebron. The scene of our lesson is in the temple at Jerusalem.

Last Quarter we heard about the rebuilding of Solomon's temple. This second temple was called Zerubbabel's temple. During the Greek period the second temple was further embellished, but in Herod's day it had grown shabby and looked insignificant beside his new and costly structures, his Antonia, Palace, Hippodrome, Theater and Amphitheater, built of limestone that resembled marble. Herod determined to gain favor with the Jews by building for them a new temple, but only after a long time could he gain their consent, and then only on the promise that he would not pull down the old one till he was ready to build the new, and that no profane hand should rear the Holy of Holies. A thousand priests were trained as masons and carpenters and in the year 20-19 B. C. they began to build the Sanctuary and completed it in eighteen months. Eight years were consumed in building the cloisters and outer enclosures, and not till 63-64, according to Josephus, were all the temple buildings and enclosures completed. And in 70 A. D. it was destroyed by Titus, and never rebuilt.

Assign paragraphs 135, 119, 120 and 1-4 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Before beginning the study of this lesson read pages 19 and 25-27 of our Introduction. Then read the first twelve chapters of Luke's Gospel, which our lessons cover this Quarter.

Christmas packages for the mission fields should leave America by November first. Read now the reference to the Surplus Department of the World's Sunday School Association, given on page 407.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE PLACE AND WORK OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Beginning the Lesson. In the last sentence of the Book of Malachi we read: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come." To the Jews who after the return from exile were in danger of drifting away from God, Malachi gave the promise of the coming day and connected with it the name of their great prophet Elijah. That it was a literal coming of Elijah which the prophet meant, is denied by the words of Jesus himself when he said of John the Baptist, "This is Elijah, that is to come." Just what the words of the prophecy of the coming day of the Lord meant to Malachi we cannot know, but to us they mean a prophecy of the coming of Jesus the Christ. The story connected with the coming of his Forerunner, John the Baptist, as told in the Gospel of Luke, is our theme today.

"If we were considering a fictitious story, we should note the artistic skill which prepared for the appearance of the hero by the introduction first of his satellite; but the order of the narrative is due, not to artistic skill, but to the divinely ordered sequence of events. It was fitting that John's office as Forerunner should begin even before his birth. So the story of his entrance into the world prepares for that of the birth which hallows all births."

He Was Great in the Sight of the Lord. It is one thing to be great in the sight of men, and quite another to "be great in the sight of the Lord." The world's ideas of personal eminence are not the same as God's. Among men, the great man is the man of lofty intellect, or of high position, or of large wealth. Men admire the thinker and the explorer, the artist and the poet. The world especially delights to honor military heroes,—the fighting men.

Who are the men whom the Lord so regards? The foundation of true greatness in his sight is piety. He does not count any one "great" who is not good. According to his Word, the great man is:—

1. The man of Faith. John the Baptist was not a scientist, nor a soldier, nor an explorer, nor a poet. He was not a Newton, nor a Bacon. He was neither a Charlemagne nor a Napoleon. He was not a Shakespeare nor a Milton. But he was a man of faith, and therefore a man of God. His heart was loyal to the Redeemer, and he pointed him out when he appeared.

2. The man who follows Conscience and Duty. This is another element of greatness in the Lord's sight. And was not John the Baptist such a man? No influence could turn him out of the right path. How faithful he always was to the message which the Lord had given him! How brave he was in his words,—in his life,—in his death! John was a dauntless witness for God, and for truth. It is this straight following of duty at whatever cost, even though it should lead to a violent death, that has made apostles, martyrs, confessors, and reformers so distinguished. Men like the Apostle Paul, like Polycarp, like Wycliffe, like Savonarola, like Luther, were "great in the sight of the Lord."

3. The man whose heart is full of Love. We do not think of John the Baptist as pre-eminently affectionate; but he must have loved both God and his fellow-creatures. Certainly the man who is devoid of love is in the Lord's sight a small man: Paul says in one of his Epistles that such a person is "nothing." He only is truly noble and great whose heart expands with Christian affection towards other men. The man of love is like God; for "God is love."

It is this power that has made many Christian missionaries so great,—such men as Xavier, William Carey, Robert Moffat,—the power of kindness, the love that burned in their hearts for the Savior and for the souls of perishing sinners. Let us resolve to accept the teaching of the Bible as to what constitutes true greatness in men.—Condensed from For the Lambs of the Flock, by Charles Jerdan.

Many of the Children of Israel Shall he Turn unto the Lord their God. Only such a man can effect such a change, in a time of religious decay, as to turn many to God. It needs a strong arm to check the downward movement and to reverse it. No one who is himself entangled in sense, and but partially filled with God's Spirit, will wield great influence for good. It takes a Hercules

to stop the chariot racing down hill, and God's Herculeses are all made on one pattern, in so far that they scorn delights, and empty themselves of self and sense that they may be filled with the Spirit.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in Gospel of St. Luke.

The Work of John the Baptist. We are apt to apply the fulsome expression "great" to any one an inch above his fellows. One who never flattered said of him whose career was brief and whose death was tragic, that of woman-born none was greater than John the Baptist. A life which received this conspicuous commendation from our Savior must be a profitable example.

The prophet came to be possessed by the conviction that he was sent of God to preach the coming of the Christ. He used Isaiah's figure of preparing the way—that is, when a king was about to pass along their wretched roads of shifting sand, he sent messengers ahead to have the people fill up the valleys, lower the hills, make the crooked places straight and the rough places even for a king's highway. Thus with unfaltering faith John gave himself to preparing the royal way for Christ, who would be kingly grace to the contrite and judgment to the impenitent. Today the greatest hindrance to Christian advance is not the infidel—there are not many of them; is not even, as commonly supposed, the church member living in evident sin—people know the genuine well enough to detect the fraud; the greatest hindrance is the lethargic man, who supposes himself loyal to his king, while doing nothing to prepare the way for the Christ to proceed farther into human life.

And the prophet was a moral reformer. It is said that a cannon should be a hundred times heavier than its shot; and from his wilderness retreat there came this God-weighted man, who had disciplined himself to despite for human fame and favor. With no wind-swayed speech he spoke, but as a Voice. Herod, thou art the adulterer; you tax gatherers, extort only what you should; you Pharisees are a brood of vipers; you who boast of your blood relationship to Abraham come to moral leadership. Thus with unflinching fearlessness he spoke, until hearts and consciences bent in penitence and prayer in the greatest turning toward righteousness the nation had seen since Ezra's time. For John it meant in his early maturity the felon's dungeon, and presently the executioner to bid him bend his neck at once. Even so; to live well is not always to live long; his task of preparation was completed, he was coronated to enjoy the fellowship of the faithful. And it approaches hypocrisy for us to spend time talking of baneful conditions, unless we are willing to pay our share of the price of effort and sacrifice that will purchase their reform.

With us usually the evangelist is one man, the social worker another. Has our Christian life any greater need than that in the same person shall be found John's evangelistic zeal and social passion? The skepticism with which John heard that Jesus was gentler than himself, that he was without ax or fire, but with a winsome charm that captivated calloused Magdalenes and care-free children—possibly that skepticism indicates the difficulty of the combination. Yet it is found in the mellower, larger Christ, and should be oftener in his followers.—Dr. John William Langdale, in The Development of the Kingdom of God.

Successors of John the Baptist. One travels across what are known as the Bad Lands of the West; a long, treeless road; the hot sun heating the sand, and the sand adding its heat to the atmosphere; great and various colored rocks lifting themselves up in all manner of castellated forms in wonderful beauty, and here and there a tree or a little oasis of green grass where there is some running stream or spring. But by and by, after the long day, the traveler begins to approach the eastern border of the Bad Lands; the trees grow more numerous, the grass grows thicker, and presently he finds himself in a garden full of luxurious vegetation.

So, in the olden times, men traveled through the world as though it were a desert. There were prophets who were oases in the desert; here and there men who heard the voice of God, felt the presence of God, were stirred by the influences of God, and reported to their less happy fellows what they heard and saw and felt. But, for the most part, men lived without the knowledge of God; they had not yet reached the moral and spiritual development in which the knowledge of God was possible. As spiritual development increased the appreciation of God increased. The numbers that knew him, realized him, rejoiced in him, increased. With the coming of Christ there was still larger vision, and now, if we did but know it, we have passed the desert, we have passed the oases, we have come into that epoch in which all the children of God may be

prophets of God, priests unto him, kings ruling by his power, prophets listening to his word and interpreting his word to others.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

For Discussion. 1. John the Baptist. See chapters 1 and 2 of The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

2. True greatness. "No epithet is more misused and misapplied than that of 'a great man.'" Its application to John the Baptist.

3. The functions of a Christian minister, as defined by Dr. Lyman Abbott, are to be a witness to a fact and a herald of a life.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How is it that Jesus was born about B. C. 5? 2. What was the condition of the Roman world at his birth? 3. What was the condition of Palestine? 4. What treasury of Christian hymns do we owe to Luke? (Magnificat, Benedictus, Nunc Dimittis, Gloria in Excelsis). 5. What does the verb *waxed* mean? 6. What instruction did Hebrew children receive in the home, as recorded in Dt. 6.6,7? 7. What does Prov. 22.6 say? 8. What was the first impression made by Jesus upon the world? 9. If you were a boy again, would you lead a different life? 10. Are you too old to learn? 11. Why was Jesus not missed earlier? 12. What did Jesus's second question mean? 13. What did this event show Joseph and Mary about the Boy? 14. What did it show the Boy about his home? 15. At what age should children be free from parental authority?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Who built the first temple? How was it destroyed? Who built the second temple? How was it destroyed? Who built the third temple?

Rows of magnificent marble columns, the four on the south being called Herod's Porch, surrounded the Court of the Gentiles, into which Jews and Gentiles alike could enter. A low balustrade warned all Gentiles that they could go no farther, on pain of death. The next Court was called the Court of Women, and here the people regularly met for public worship. Here the "whole multitude of the people" were praying at the hour of incense, while through the narrow Court of Israel, into the Court of the Priests and on into the Holy Place, Zacharias and his two attendants had passed in white robes and unsandalled feet. One of the attendants had carried a golden bowl full of incense, and the other another golden bowl full of burning coals. These they put on the altar of incense and then they went out and left Zacharias alone. In this Holy Place there were also the seven branched golden candlestick and the table of shew-bread, and behind heavy curtains and golden-covered doors was the most holy place of all, the Holy of Holies, which was entered only by the high priest and by him only once a year. As another priest in the Court of the Priests was sacrificing the evening lamb on the great altar of Burnt Offering, it was the duty of Zacharias to take the incense and sprinkle it on the burning coals, whence a thick, fragrant smoke would arise together with the prayers of the people without.

A Parent's Joy.

My little baby, little boy blue,
Is as sweet as sugar and cinnamon, too;
Isn't this precious darling of ours
Sweeter than dates and cinnamon flowers?

This little sentiment from Dr. Headland's Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes tells the tale that all the world is kin in its father and mother love for the little, helpless babe entrusted to their care.

The Hebrews have always regarded a childless home as a great calamity. Such a home was that of the priest Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth. Who will tell how the promise of the coming of a son into that household was received?

He Shall be Great in the Sight of the Lord. One day a fire broke out in a theater and the building and contents were wholly destroyed. As the company who were to have acted there in the evening were discussing the fire, in rushed a fun-loving young page with a charred bit of wood. "There!" he exclaimed breathlessly, "I saved that! It's the exact middle. I knew A's life wouldn't be worth living if anything deprived him of the center of the stage."

How many more people do you suppose there are who covet that sort of great-

ness, than there are who covet greatness in the sight of the Lord? John the Baptist did become great in the sight of the Lord, he cared nothing at all for greatness in the sight of men. When "all the world" flocked to hear him, he used every possible expression to make them see that he himself was nothing, a mere voice crying in the wilderness. How great he was in the sight of God we know from Jesus's words: "But wherefore went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

"Though thy name be borne abroad,
Like the wing'd seed, from shore to shore,
What thou art before thy God,
That thou art, and nothing more!"

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord. It was Sunday, along toward evening. The snow had been falling heavily all day. Jerry Wilcox hitched up two horses to his new snowplow and made a wide path from the back door to the barn, then around to the street and across the walk in front. As he was about to drive back to the barn it occurred to him to drive on to the meeting-house, not that any one was likely to get out after such a storm, but if anybody should, why, the path would help. After turning in at the gate of the meeting-house and making a good path to the door, he said to himself, "I might as well plow round to the minister's door. He will have to come out, anyway." At the parsonage gate he remembered the Widow Stevens farther on, who always went to church. And then because it was not worth while to come back on the same side of the street he crossed over, and made a good path on the other side. Next he thought of Deacon Graham, on the cross-street, and his own Sunday-school teacher round the corner; and so he plowed round that way and went home by another route.

After supper he remarked that he was going to church, just to see if anybody did get out. There was so good a path, his mother said she would go, too, and Jerry's father also decided to go along. The minister, looking out of his study window, had seen Jerry and his plow, and had taken courage. A number of families looked out at the ringing of the church bell, were surprised to find a path, and having been housed all day, thought it well to stir out and go to meeting. And so it happened that the minister looked over the largest evening congregation that had assembled since the cold weather set in.

The text that evening, happily, was, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord"; and the lesson was that, besides those who are to do great things, the world needs those who in faithfulness prepare the way for them.

Said the minister: "I find an illustration close at hand for the lesson of the evening. Few of you would have come to church this evening had not some one thoughtfully plowed a path. If the sermon of tonight does any good, a share in the joy of the accomplishment of that good belongs to him who prepared the way for the members of the congregation to come to the house of the Lord."—Adapted from The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I see in every child the possibilities of a perfect man.—Froebel.

The best expression of joy, when long cherished desires are at last on the eve of accomplishment, is thanks to God.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Note-Book Work. Begin a new book entitled Jesus the World's Savior: Studies in Luke. Today write I. The Birth of the Forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In all the dates of the lessons so far studied this year, what two letters were always used, and what do they mean? 2. With today's lesson and onward, two different letters are used: what are they, and what do they mean? 3. Where is Bethlehem? 4. Tell the story of the visit of the wise men to the Babe. 5. The story of the flight into Egypt. 6. To what city did the Holy Family return? 7. What facts does the Bible tell us about the boyhood of Jesus? 8. Were there other children in Jesus's home: see Mk. 6.3. 9. How long a journey was it from Nazareth to Jerusalem? (Use the scale of miles on the map.)

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Golden Text

**And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature,
and in favor with God and men. Luke 2.52**

LESSON Luke 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 9.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 1.18 to 2.23

LUKE 2.40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; 43 and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; 44 but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: 45 and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. 46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: 47 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE SHEPHERDS, THE ANGELS, AND THE BABE, verses 1-20.

II. THE PRESENTATION OF THE BABE IN THE TEMPLE, verses 21-24.

III. SIMEON AND HIS "NUNC DIMITTIS"; ANNA THE PROPHETESS, verses 25-39.

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF JESUS. verses 40 and 52. *And the child grew, and waxed strong* (*waxed* is the Old English word for *grew*), *filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him:* this is the first verse of our lesson text, *And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man:* this is the last verse. Jesus grew physically, mentally, and spiritually; he had a gradual development until he attained a perfect manhood. The one incident recorded between these verses is all that we know about his childhood.

V. AN INCIDENT IN THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS, verses 41-51. Before the law, Joseph was the father of Jesus, and so Luke speaks of his *parents,* who went *every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover.* Women were not obliged to attend the feast, although they often did. This was the chief Jewish festival: it began on the fourteenth of Nisan (April). At twelve, according to Jewish custom, Jesus was called "a son of the Law," and its obligations were binding upon him. Among them was the celebrating at Jerusalem of the three great festivals of the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Accordingly, when the Feast of the Passover came around, Jesus went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem. Perhaps while there he stayed with friends, away from his parents, and perhaps he expected them to remain the full seven days, while they remained only the two days necessary to *fulfill the days.* They had gone a day's journey toward Nazareth before they missed him. They knew that they could trust him, and it is not surprising that they supposed him with *kinsfolk and acquaintances,* for in the caravan in which they naturally travelled there would be a large company from Nazareth and near-by towns, and the boys and young men would walk together in groups, the older ones going by themselves. Dr. Thomp-

son questions whether there is ever a pilgrimage made from Jerusalem to the Jordan at the present day without the separation of parents and children equally prolonged.

There were rooms off from the temple courts where the teachers, famous Doctors of the Law, were wont to meet their pupils, expound the law, and answer questions. A large part of the rabbinical books are said to consist of answers given by rabbis to their pupils' questions. Here among the teachers and pupils, Joseph and Mary found the lost Boy, listening and asking questions which showed such understanding that all were amazed. His mother's troubled rebuke, *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?* he answered in surprise, *How is it that ye sought me?* And then he added, *Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?* It may be that about this time Jesus first realized that he was different from those with whom he lived. It may be that the first sight of Jerusalem and the temple, the religious observance of the feast, and the questions and answers of the rabbis, caused the real meaning of his life and mission to dawn upon his mind, caused him to realize his relation to his Divine Father and his work. Whatever his thoughts, he remained the true, obedient Son of Mary, and returning with his parents to Nazareth was *subject unto them.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And the child grew, verse 40. Christianity is the only religion that makes anything of the childhood of its Founder. The other religions of the world either have nothing to say about the childhood of their founders, or preserve only a few insignificant traditions. Tradition says that Lao-tse, the founder of Taoism, was born as an old man. And Christianity is the only religion that takes any particular account of children themselves. The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus's miracles in behalf of children, and of his love and tenderness toward children. The other religions are concerned only with adults. Their message is a message for adults.—Dr. Robert E. Speer.

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, verse 51. The traveller who has followed any of the children of Nazareth—as I have done—to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, happy, patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those houses, with the doves sunning themselves on the white roofs, and the vines wreathed about them.

The mats, or carpets, are laid loose along the walls; shoes and sandals are taken off at the threshold; from the center hangs a lamp which forms the only ornament of the room; in some recess in the wall is placed the wooden chest, painted with bright colors, which contains the books or other possessions of the family; on a ledge that runs round the wall, within easy reach, are neatly rolled up the gay-colored quilts, which serve as beds, and on the same ledge are ranged the earthen vessels for daily use; near the door stand the large water-jars of red clay with a few twigs and green leaves—often of aromatic shrubs—thrust into their orifices to keep the water cool. At mealtime a painted wooden stool is placed in the center of the apartment, a large tray is put upon it, and in the middle of the tray stands the dish of rice and meat, or *libban,* or stewed fruits, from which all help themselves in common. Both before and after the meal the servant or the youngest member of the family, pours water over the hands from a brazen ewer into a brazen bowl. So quiet, so simple, so humble, so uneventful was the outward life of the family at Nazareth.—F. W. Farrar.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Recall events in the childhood of the kings about whom we have had lessons this year.

The Birth of Jesus. "The beginning of everything," said Faber, "is the Cradle of Christ." Girt round with wonders was his birth, and the greatest of all the wonders was manifested to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. The beautiful story needs no repetition here.

The Presentation in the Temple. Soon after the Babe's birth more comfortable quarters were found for him and his mother, and when he was eight days old, he received the name of Jesus. Forty days after his birth Mary and

Joseph brought him to the temple to solemnly present him "before the Lord" as the first-born. The presentation to the priest was an acknowledgment of God's claim, and by the payment of five shekels the Babe was redeemed and given back to Mary. On the same day the rite of ceremonial purification was fulfilled by Mary, as in the Court of the Women she presented to the priest her offering of a pair of turtle doves. It was as she was leaving the Court with her Babe that she was met by Simeon.

Simeon, like the rest of his nation, was looking for the Messiah, but while most expected Jesus to be an earthly Redeemer, a King who should free them from their foreign oppression, Simeon's heart and character had prepared him for a spiritual Ruler, the Savior from sin and the Glory of Israel, and the Light to the Gentiles. In simple faith he had gone into the temple that day, and when he saw the Babe his heart told him that here was the long-looked for Savior.

The Visit of the Wise Men, the Journey to Egypt, and the Return to Nazareth. These events are recorded by Matthew. It is not known how long the Holy Family remained in Egypt, but it was after Herod's death that they returned and settled in Nazareth. The only event of the childhood of Jesus is recorded by Luke in our lesson of today. The date is April A. D. 9.

Head of a Twelve-Year-Old Boy of the First Century B.C. From a Bronze Statue in the Metropolitan Museum, New York

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethlehem is six miles south of Jerusalem. Here Jesus was born and here came the shepherds and later the wise men to see the Infant Christ. In the limestone rock of Bethlehem are many caves, and such caves were often used as stables. On the public square is the Church of the Nativity, erected by Constantine about three hundred years after the birth of Christ. Beneath its high altar there is a partly natural, and partly artificial cave, which is claimed as the birthplace of Jesus.

Nazareth, the home of Jesus from infancy till he began his public career, is situated in Lower Galilee midway between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee. It is encircled by hills, and from the summit of the southern hill one has a beautiful view of the Plain of Esdraelon on the south; of the Valley of the Jordan on the east, and beyond it, the mountains of Gilead; and of Carmel and the Mediterranean on the west. From the northern hill one sees the mountains of Galilee rising one above the other with snowy Mount Hermon in the Lebanon Range of Syria towering above them all.

It is eighty miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Four days were usually required to make the journey, but probably the caravan with which Joseph and Mary traveled would not go more than six or eight miles the first day.

Assign paragraphs 133, 134, 162-164 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

A young girl had undertaken to teach a group of twelve year old boys in a mission school. She had entered upon her task with much zeal, but one Sunday the superintendent saw her sitting silent and listless before her class, while the boys were whispering and scuffling. "What was the trouble?" he asked her at the close of the school. "They know nothing," she replied. "I know little more. When I thought of all the doctrines and wisdom and divine meaning in the Bible which I do not understand, I concluded to give it up."

"Suppose," said the superintendent, "that you should see piled up here all the bread and meat which you will eat in the course of your life. It would appall you. You would turn from it in horror. But you would gladly receive it, a

mouthful at a time, and it would give strength and nourishment to your blood and brain.

"Your soul will be fed by God in the same way. You are weak and feel your need of greater knowledge. He does not expect you to become as wise and holy as an apostle or martyr in an hour, but slowly—as the body grows."

"The Lord is my teacher,
I will not lose my way.
He leadeth me in the lowly path of learning,
He prepareth a lesson for me every day:
He bringeth me to the clear fountains of instruction,
Little by little he showeth me the beauty of truth."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF THE YOUNG

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Robert E. Speer tells the following story in his book entitled The Master of the Heart:—

I went one Sunday afternoon in New York City, not long ago, to a religious meeting, where a man was talking to men about Hofmann's pictures of our Lord. He had an excellent collection of them in stereopticon slides which he was showing to this crowd of men. He reserved until the last Hofmann's picture of Jesus as a lad talking with the doctors in the temple. As he threw the picture on the screen, a beautifully colored picture, he told the story of how he came to be in possession of his copy of it. He had gone to visit Hofmann, immediately after the completion of that painting, and Hofmann gave him the first copy. He brought that copy home and put it in his business office in New York City. One day, as he was sitting there, a judge from the Supreme Court of one of the New England States came in to consult him about some business. He saw the picture standing on the easel. Instantly his eyes were attracted to it. He looked at it all the time he was discussing his business, and after the business was over he sat a little while still looking at the picture, and then went away. Later in the morning he came back and said, "I want to see that Boy again." He was invited to sit down, and he sat down and gazed at that face, at the great open eyes, at that look of purity, which speaks of such hope and strength for men. He sat for nearly an hour looking at it, and then got up, his eyes very moist, and walked away. In the afternoon he came back and said, "I would like to see the picture of the Boy once more." The owner gave it to him, and said, "Go into my private office, sit down and look at it as long as you want to." He took the picture and went, and then he came out and laid the picture down, and with the tears running down his cheeks he said, "The Boy has conquered me." And he went out from the room with the picture of that Boy lingering in his life and transforming it. He is living now, said the speaker, in his own State, an influential Christian man, teaching scores of young men in his Bible class of him unto whom he had looked away and by whom he had been changed.

The First Impression Jesus Made. Jesus was brought up in the carpenter's home, where he lived a normal, true human life. His life itself was a wonder, but not a startling succession of wonders. The boys with whom he grew up had a perfect Example of a true and godly childhood, which was not overwhelming and unnatural, but just true and fine and wholesome. Once when he was a dozen years old there was a flash, there in the temple, but only Mary had any unusual insight into that. Thirty years he lived the best kind of life that can be imagined, working quietly and honestly at the carpenter's trade. "These were years," says Clarke, "of simple human living as man, citizen, laborer and child of God."—Bishop McDowell, in In the School of Christ.

A Lesson for Parents. In most American families parents are lavish in their demonstrations of love for their babies and very young children. As the children grow older, parental criticism begins, and often the mother "nags" and the father issues arbitrary commands. Such unwise measures the child brings upon himself by his growing self-assertion—"obstreperousness"—and heedlessness, but such measures wound his pride and arouse his sense of injustice. The day will come—and he knows it—when his views will be respected, but just when he feels the dawning of the power that is to be his he receives the least consideration and attention.

From eleven to sixteen, when a strange awkwardness takes the place of

childish suppleness and grace, and when gusts of emotion apparently as unreasonable as those of infancy interrupt the orderliness of life, just then the family often begins to judge according to new and impossible standards, and the young people hear those ominous words, "A great boy like you!" "A girl of your age!" Booth Tarkington's book entitled Seventeen portrays one phase of this. The conduct that once was "good," such as effacing himself to devour a book, and so keeping "out of the way," is all at once "bad," "selfish," "lazy," "rude."

The girl who has grown rapidly in height and has suddenly become filled with great ideas and enthusiasms is expected to comport herself with "ladylike reserve" and to show "judgment." The powers she has gained are not wanted, and the exercise is demanded of powers which have not yet blossomed. So she suffers alike from the repression of what she offers and from demands that she cannot meet. She is then doubly at odds with her world.

The parents of Jesus knew that he had powers which they had not. So, often, do the parents of young genuises. The Hindu Brahmin who bowed before his little boy saying, "To the divinity that is within you, my son," was right. How many Isaac Watts and Benjamin Wests are snubbed by the arrogance of ignorant adults into hiding their God-given talents we shall never know.

Your son and daughter may lack virtues which you think you had at their age. They certainly have ideals and knowledges and purposes which you did not have. These things they share with the whole generation which soon will rule the world. They have direct relations with God, with the future. They mediate the progress that he intends. They are his tools, his messengers, the conductors of his power. By every device which you can compass you should seek to put your experience at your child's disposal, because you respect his mission.

The Problem of the Younger Generation. Sometimes the young may be more right than the old, and sometimes the old may be more right than the young. It is not the part of a wise man to presume that either is right because of age or youth. What is important is to avoid a breach and collision between the young and the old, between one generation and another, and to get the maximum of truth by combining experience with freshness. Mary and Joseph are bent on one thing, the Boy of twelve on another. Both are right, but both have something to learn from one another.

Joseph and Mary learned by the scene in the temple to know the Child himself better. Parents too often take it for granted that they know their own children, all about them, just because they are their parents and have watched them growing up. But it is not so. Children are all new human beings, with new faculties and blendings of faculty. They are, moreover, mysterious to themselves, and not seldom full of reserve towards their parents, reserve which becomes more close if they detect an inquisitive strain on the parents' part. You cannot break down that reserve; you can only watch it gradually break down if they find they can trust you through a term of years. So Joseph and Mary got to know the Child better when they saw him among other people, and beheld him showing powers for which their home at Nazareth had not afforded scope and play.

To the Child himself it revealed, not that he was wrong in thinking his Heavenly Father nearer and greater to him than anyone else, and that Father's house a place of learning and education more important than the learning about wood and iron, material and tools, but he also learned, when he saw his mother's anxious face and heard her troubled question, that there is a time for everything, and that he must not now take more time in the temple, but must go down and be subject to them in Nazareth and in the carpenter's shop.

That is a very large thing in a boy's or young man's education—to learn how to treat his parents properly, to adjust the balance between what he wants to do and what they want him to do, between what he thinks he ought to do and what they think he ought to do. To see two modern instances of this it is but necessary to recall Mr. Edmund Gosse's book, Father and Son, and the recent Life of Samuel Butler; a perusal of either would give their reader a strong impression of "how not to do it." For what we commonly see in life is an exhibition of faults on both sides.—Adapted from an Article by W. H. Draper.

The Formative Years. Childhood is the formative period of human life, physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. One would never discover

this vital truth, however, from any analysis of our general program of action. As a rule we are found "waiting until the child grows up" before we think anything worth while can be done.

The amount of neglect in the training of children for life's duties and opportunities is nothing short of stupendous. For their physical welfare frequent dosages of patent medicines, a large use of prohibitions summed up in the one word "Don't," and a general blundering along appear to constitute the main provisions. Intellectual preparation for life is turned over in most cases to the public school without as much as a second thought. And when it comes to that most important aspect of the child's life, his religious development, we find even on the part of Christian people an amazing indifference. In just a word, we do not begin to sense the importance of the formative years.

The largest evangelistic opportunity before the church today is represented by our growing boys and girls. It is highly essential to genuine achievement that the winning and training of the coming generation for Christ begin in the home under the leadership of the parents themselves. The home is closer to the child than any other institution, and its influences are so intimate and powerful as largely to fix the trend of his feeling and thinking before he comes into contact with either the church or the school. Much, very much, depends upon the home atmosphere and the sense of an understanding comradeship, if the boy or girl is to unfold into largeness of life. The author of a recent book of essays says regarding this subject: "My greatest objection to the parents of the past is that so many of them allowed themselves to believe that their own comfort and their children's morality were one and the same thing." Is not this very fact one of the main reasons why so many children of prominent church members are today outside the organization? Goodness cannot be made very attractive either by constant repetitions of negative admonitions or even by the most irreproachable kind of strait-laced example, if the warmth of companionship, sympathy, and love is kept in the background. Every effort, therefore, which tends to promote a buoyant, virile Christian atmosphere in the home has a most significant bearing on the spiritual development of the child.—Condensed from Zion's Herald.

The Permanence of Early Training. "I have educated nesting linnets under the three best singing larks, the skylark, woodlark, and titlark, every one of which, instead of the linnet's song, adhered entirely to that of their respective instructor. When the note of the titlark linnet was thoroughly fixed I hung the bird for a quarter of a year in a room with two common linnets which were in full song; the titlark linnet, however, did not borrow any note from the linnet's song, but adhered steadfastly to that of the titlark."—Daines Barrington, in Philosophical Transactions.

For Discussion. 1. From the Old Testament point of view the progress is made from the knowledge of Christ to the knowledge of Jesus: from the New Testament point of view, the progress is made from the knowledge of Jesus to the knowledge of Christ.—Bengel.

2. Boys. See The Atlantic, March, 1920.

3. The Divine Boy. See chapters 3-6 of The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

4. His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. Pride is one of the seven deadly sins; but it cannot be the pride of a mother in her children, for this is a compound of the cardinal virtues—faith and hope.—Dickens.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was John's mission? (Jn. 1.6-8). 2. What were the great religious parties at this time, and for what did each stand? (Biblical Cyclopædias). 3. What do the two Latin words mean from which our English word *repent* comes? 4. What evidences of repentance did John require? 5. Define repentance. 6. Illustrate repentance from the records of the Bible. From biography. 7. Read Ps. 51.1-4. 8. What is man's part in repentance? 9. What is God's part? 10. What parable spoken by Jesus is recalled by verse 9? (Lk. 13.7). 11. How many figures of speech can you find in this lesson and what is the meaning of each? 12. Describe the oriental method of threshing. 13. Read the entire third chapter of Luke and give an estimate of John's character. 14. Of his message. 15. Of his method. 16. Would such preaching as John's be tolerated today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JESUS AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL

Beginning the Lesson. "During thousands of years young kings have been born in palaces and laid in gorgeous cradles beneath softest coverings. (As Mary Stewart writes in A King among Men.) On the cradle and the coverlet there has generally been a crown, a sign that this baby was different from the children born into humble homes, where no golden cradle or embroidered robe lay waiting to receive them. Thus they grew up, with the crown always before their eyes, on tiny caps and cloaks, emblazoned upon chariots, and embroidered even upon their handkerchiefs. It reminded them every day that there were two classes of boys, those who held rank and ruled, and those who were born to work for their masters. But one starry night many years ago a King was born, the greatest who ever came into this world, and over his head there was emblazoned no crown, no palace opened its doors to receive him, and no court lady placed him reverently in a splendid bed." You all know the story of his birth, the birth of Jesus Christ. Who will tell the story as given in the Gospel of Luke?

Jesus at Home. Did you ever stop to think that nine-tenths of the life of Jesus on earth—thirty years out of the thirty-three—were spent in that humble home in Nazareth in preparation for the one-tenth of active public service? During that time he was growing, developing, gathering knowledge and experience for the great task awaiting him. We see Jesus at twelve years of age dutiful and godly, eager yet patient, sensible of his mission and yet content to abide God's appointed time in his humble home.

He was subject, obedient, to his parents, Luke tells us. As a Boy, tender affection, willing obedience must have marked his Nazareth life.

The Gospels do not describe his early life, but from his words during his public ministry we can infer many things. He played games with other children (Lk. 7.31, 32); he watched the flowers (Lk. 12.27), and the birds (Lk. 8.5), the chickens (Mt. 23, 37), the foxes (Lk. 9.58), the farmer (the parable of the sower), the shepherd (the parable of the sheep), the vine-dresser (Jn. 15.2). He learned to tell the weather signs (Mt. 16.2).

Jesus at School. From his use of the Scriptures we know that Jesus was a diligent student of the Old Testament in his youth. His quotations show also that he read it in the original Hebrew, and not in the Greek translation which was then in general use. Josephus, writing of those days, says: "We devote the greatest pains to the education of children, and to make the observance of the Law and the rules of piety which have been given us the most important business of our lives." And Philo tells us that the Jews were well instructed in the Law from their earliest youth.

The following interesting account of the early education given every Jewish boy, such as Jesus must have received, is by Dr. Edersheim.

A religious atmosphere surrounded a child of Jewish parents. As soon as he learned to speak his religious instruction began,—no doubt with such verses of Holy Script as composed that part of the Jewish Liturgy which answers to our Creed. Then would follow other passages from the Bible, short prayers, and select sayings of the sages. Special attention was paid to the culture of the memory, since forgetfulness might prove as fatal in its consequences as ignorance or neglect of the Law. Very early the child must have been taught what might be called his birthday-text, some verse of Scripture beginning, or ending with, or at least containing, the same letters as his Hebrew name. This guardian-promise the child would insert in his daily prayers. The earliest hymns taught would be the Psalms for the days of the week, or festive Psalms such as those connected with the festive pilgrimages to Zion. At five or six years of age the boy formed one of a semi-circle of pupils about the teacher at school in the synagogue. All either stood or sat on the ground. Until ten years old the Scriptures were his only text book: from ten to fifteen he studied traditional law: then followed theological discussions. The Nazareth home was probably too poor to possess its own Sacred Volume or Rolls, and it was in the Synagogue that Jesus pored over them.

Jesus on a Vacation. Did it ever occur to you that when Jesus went to Jerusalem in his twelfth year he was on a holiday? Yes, on a holiday he of his own choice went to school, joined the pupils of the rabbis in the temple,

and stayed on asking and answering earnest questions, when he might have been in the fields playing with the children. So his behavior as a Boy teaches the same lesson as the Parable of the Talents: that God means each one to make the best use of his powers of body, and mind, and spirit. Slackness and waste of opportunities are unchristian.—Gleanings.

The Picture of Christ in the Temple, by Hofmann. Give your scholars penny copies of this picture and ask them to describe each figure. Long ago, some one gave in the Los Angeles Times this fine description:—

The ideal beauty of the boy Christ is beyond description, yet there is nothing unreal about him; he looks like a boy whom we should love to know, and should certainly love if we did know him. The graceful figure, the thoughtful brow, the perfect head, the wisdom and fire of the eyes, and the delicate features may all be shown in engravings, but the clear purity of the complexion, and the singular radiance that comes from the figure cannot be reproduced.

The coloring is very fine, for Mr. Hofmann seems to be master of all the tints discovered by modern art. The man at the left leaning one elbow on the reading stand wears a robe of violet-red, and a mantle of dark green with a tinge of blue in the coloring. The head of the man just behind him is covered with an end of his brown mantle, below which is seen a little of his dark gold tunic. The seated sage wears a velvet mantle of a deep old-rose hue, the philosopher leaning one hand on the back of his chair wears a robe of striking green, and that of the hoary patriarch in the center, who leans upon a staff and listens with such a shrewd, calculating air, is a subdued tone of ashes-of-roses. The robe of the wonderful Boy is spotless white, with a delicate oriental tracery, and about his waist a girdle of Syrian weave and dye.

Almost all oriental people talk with their hands, and in this picture the hands play an important part. The Boy, in whom all the light of the picture seems to center, or, better, from whom all the light seems to emanate, says with that beautiful hand outstretched toward the book held in the lap of the learned doctor sitting in the foreground, "It is written on those very pages." There is no argument, no passion, but calm, dignified reference to the law, back of which they cannot go, the very word which these gray-haired men have spent their lives studying. Now note the right hand. It rests lightly and easily, with the arm in repose, but see the forefinger uplifted, as if he could hardly restrain his eagerness to convince them of the truth of his statement, an impulsive, boyish, natural motion.

The one seated, with the volume on his knees, holds the partly turned leaf as a student would, carefully, reverently, yet both hands say plainly: "I hold to the Word: if it is written here, I abide by it."

The one just behind him rests one hand on the back of the chair, as if signifying his intention to agree with him and with the Word, but how certainly the right hand argues the point, not aggressively, but as if desiring only a clear understanding of the matter.

As for the aged man in the background, he has reached the borderland where so many things seem not worth argument, or, like this, seemingly beyond argument; and, with folded hands clasped one over the other on his staff, he rests, and waits the outcome of all the wonderful things this divine Boy is telling.

Now mark the man at the opposite side. His right hand holds clasped the roll. But the arm is akimbo, with the back of the hand on the hip, and the elbow turned forward, an aggressive position, an attitude naturally assumed by one who is thoroughly convinced that he is in the right, and ready to hold his own against any who would dispute him. But the left hand is yet more expressive. It covers the mouth, the natural gesture of one overtaken by surprise and anxious to hide the fact; compelled against his wishes to acquiesce in the statements of the speaker, yet trying to find a loophole of escape. Despite his aggressive elbow, you feel that the man is almost persuaded that he must acknowledge that this youthful expounder of the law speaks whereof he knows.

After you have looked at them all, how the one white extended hand of the Christ dominates the picture: thoroughly natural, you yet feel the more than human compelling power of the gesture, and remember the divinity back of it.

Better than almost any other artist, Mr. Hofmann has succeeded in painting the face of the Christ, and in all his pictures—and they are many, for his life has been given to the painting of scenes in the life of the Savior—the face is

that of this Boy in the temple, the same face grown older, more commanding, and with the divinity shining through more and more.

Like Other Boys.

He was a boy like other boys,
And played and sported with the rest,
He had his troubles and his joys,
And strove for mastery with the best.
He was great-hearted, tender, true,
And brave as any boy could be,
And very gentle, for he knew,
That Love is God's own Chivalry.
And one thing I am sure about,—
He never tumbled into sin,
But kept himself, within, without,
As God had made him, sweet and clean.—John Oxenham.

Obedient to Authority. Every now and then we read in the newspapers about some precocious child who at ten plays chess with the experts, or at twelve discusses the fourth dimension, or at fourteen paints fine pictures or writes beautiful poetry, or plays the violin so as to astonish the world, and the reporter adds, "Yet he is an obedient and happy child." The reporter does not seem to know that the more advanced the child's development of reason and of soul the more likely the child is to submit to his parents' authority. It is not the real genius, but only the one who apes genius who defies parents and others in authority.

"I am all right if I like my teacher," said Frank, when sent to the Principal's office. "But I can't get along with Mr. Wright."

"Look here," said the Principal, "You come to school to prepare for your life's work, I take it. Now when you step out into your life work you will quite likely be in a business where there are many bosses—a president, perhaps, and a vice-president, and a secretary, and a treasurer, and several managers of various grades. You may like nine of them, and "get along" with them well, but if there is a tenth whom you don't like, and with whom you don't "get along," his vote alone may prevent your getting some promotion, and give it to the other boy who obeys all orders and "gets along" with everybody. Here in school is your practising time. Every teacher affords you an opportunity to learn, not only his subject but his type. There is somebody like him in the business world. Take advantage of your opportunities to learn both algebra and "getting along" from Mr. Wright.

"I will, sir," said Frank, who is not really as foolish as he sometimes appears, "thank you, sir." And he went back to his class.

The greater the nascent powers you have, the more likely you are to subordinate yourself to those who, though they may not have achieved what you may achieve have yet experience and knowledge of which you ought to take advantage.

If ever a boy on the edge of manhood had a right to judge for himself, be his own master and guide, it was Jesus, the Lad, who felt within him the growth of something more than genius. But he was subject unto his parents.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Jesus sanctified childhood by passing through it.—Irenæus.

Success is growing to your full spiritual stature under God's sky.—Carlyle.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.—Paul.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. II. The Birth and Childhood of Jesus. Tell the story of his birth in the words of one of the shepherds. Tell the story of his visit to the temple in the words of Mary.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where did John prepare for his work as forerunner? (Lk. 1.80). 2. How was he clad and what was his food in the wilderness? (Mt. 3.4). 3. How does John the Baptist resemble the prophet Elijah? 4. How was Elijah a "disturber of the peace"? 5. How was John the Baptist? 6. What does *repent* mean? 7. Tell a story recorded in the Bible of some one who was repentant. 8. Was Esau, who sold his birthright, repentant? 9. Was Judas, who killed himself?

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Golden Text

Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 3.2

LESSON Luke 3 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 40.1-11

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 11.2-19; Philippians 2.5-11

LUKE 3.7 He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9 And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10 And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? 11 And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. 12 And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? 13 And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse *any one* wrongfully; and be content with your wages. 15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; 16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and *in* fire: 17 whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE REGION ABOUT THE JORDAN, verses 1-6. To John in the wilderness came *the word of God* bidding him go to the Jordan region and preach *the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.* Thereby, says Luke, he fulfilled the words of Isaiah (Isa. 40.3-5). Josephus says of John: "He was a good man, and urged the Jews who were willing to live worthily, and to show uprightness one to another, and piety toward God, to be baptised. For baptism was approved of by him, not as a means of obtaining pardon for some sins only, but for the purity of the whole body, when the soul had been cleansed beforehand by righteousness."

II. THE CALL TO REPENTANCE, verses 7-9. The multitude that came to be baptised John denounced as the *offspring of vipers.* Vipers, or serpents, were considered emblems of deceitfulness and wickedness: John called the Pharisees and Sadducees by this term because, knowing their natural deceitfulness and cunning, he doubted the sincerity of their motive in coming to him. And then he questioned, Who thought it worth while to warn you *to flee from the wrath to come,* the Day of Judgment? Since the Pharisees thought themselves so righteous they should not have feared the judgment, while the Sadducees professed to disbelieve in it and therefore they should not have been disturbed. The phrase recalls the picture of vipers in the fields fleeing before the flames when the stubble is set on fire. "No one accuses young people of today with being a 'generation of vipers,'" says Dr. Van Dyke, "but there is cumulative evidence of their being a generation of butterflies." *Bring forth therefore*—if you would escape the wrath—*fruits worthy of repentance,* deeds that will prove the sincerity of your repentance, and *begin not to say* in your hearts, *We have Abraham to our father*—"the Jewish boast; the Jewish error." Compare Jesus's words in Jn. 8.39. They believed they all would be saved because they were descendants of Abraham. "The fire of hell has no power

to consume even the sinners of Israel, say the rabbis, but they go down only to be frightened, slightly singed for their bad actions. Then comes Abraham, who kept all the precepts of the Law, and through his own merit brings them up again" (Dummelow). Inherited privileges do not avail, John told them, the question is, What are you in yourselves? *For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham:* in their stead others could be made by God the heirs of the promise given to Abraham. See Gal. 3.6, 7; Rom. 4.16. By his next figure of speech John forcibly shows how near he thought the divine judgment to be: *Even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* Fruit trees were all taxed, hence a tree that failed to yield fruit was quickly cut down.

III. WHAT MUST WE DO? verses 10-14. The multitude were stirred by John's preaching and they trembled before a denunciation. *What then must we do?* they asked. And John told them that religion had to do with life; that the man who had food and raiment to spare should share with the man who lacked, that the man whose business it was to collect taxes should be honest and collect only what was due; that the soldier whose business it was to keep the peace should be merciful and just and contented.

IV. JOHN'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING JESUS, verses 15-17. The people at this time were aroused by the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, and they began to wonder whether or not John might be he. But John told them that while he baptized them with water, there was one coming, one mightier than he, the thong of whose shoe he was *not worthy to unloose.* When John had spoken to the people about their sins he uttered the severest denunciations in tones of regal authority: now as he compares himself with the Coming One he utters words of the deepest humility. He that is infinitely mightier than John will baptize them *in the Holy Spirit and in fire.* "John says, in effect: I can bring you to repentance, but no farther. My baptism gives no grace. His baptism will give you new spiritual life, and inward sanctification, holy fervor and zeal in God's service" (Dummelow). "Take a modern Jew who has been converted unto the Christian faith, and you will find that one of the favorite phrases by which he tries to give expression to his experience is this, 'I feel a burning within me.' What does he mean? He means that the sense of icy discipleship to law has become changed into a consciousness of warm discipleship to a Person. He was baptized with water, now he is baptized with fire" (Jowett). His *fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse the threshing-floor,* continued John, *and to gather the wheat into his garner.* The winnowing fan threw up the wheat and the chaff together; the wind then blew away the chaff, while the wheat fell in a heap, whence it could be carried to the granary, or store house. See Ps. 1.4. *But the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.* "John was correct in thinking that our Lord is a consuming fire, but he had not yet apprehended the nature of that fire, the Love which burns with a destructive power against all that is opposed to love. As the object of the farmer is to get the pure wheat from chaff, so it is Christ's object to get pure souls aflame with love, free from the dross and the impurities which depreciate them" (R. F. Horton).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Extort no more than that which is appointed you, verse 13. In Palestine today, a native declared before the British assumed a mandate over the land, the local agents or publicans have authority to assess taxes on lands and tithes on produce and live stock, and at the same time to exact their own remuneration, which sometimes amounts to a hundred per cent.

The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, verse 16. Like other orientals, Jesus wore sandals which were merely leather soles fastened to the feet by means of leather thongs. On entering a house one had his sandals taken off and his feet dusted by a servant. This was considered the most menial of all services, and the rabbis said: "Every service which a servant will perform for his master, a disciple will do for his rabbi, except loosing his sandal thong." Similar sandals are worn today by the people of the remote villages of Syria and by peasants of Greece, Italy and Spain.

Fan . . . threshing-floor, verse 17. The threshing-floor was a circular space

in the field beaten hard or else paved, surrounded by a row of stones. The process of threshing and winnowing is described by Dr. George M. Mackie, Missionary at Beyrout, in Bible Manners and Customs:

Sheaves are unbound and sprinkled over it, till the straw lies about a foot deep. The simplest mode of threshing is to drive cattle and donkeys over the dry straw, but the contrivance of the threshing-board is generally resorted to. This consists of thick planks nailed together, making an oblong of five by four feet, having lumps of rough basaltic rock let into the under-surface of the boards. A pair of oxen are yoked to it, and a man stands upon it, goad in hand, and drives the oxen round from morning till evening. These are the oxen that must not be muzzled, but are allowed to pick up straws as often as they wish (Dt. 25.4). The winnowing is done by the shovel and the fan. The fan is a simple wooden pitchfork. By it the compound of straw, chaff and grain is tossed in the air, the chaff flies away over the hillside, and where it accumulates at the great public threshing-floors it is burnt up. The straw is deposited a few yards off, while the grain falls at the feet of the winnower. In this pile there is still a good deal of husk and straw, and it is at this concluding stage of the winnowing that the shovel is brought into use. Among the peasantry of the present day any recommendation of a winnowing-machine is met by the remonstrance that their fathers did it in this way.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What great city was warned of its sins, how did it repent, and what was the result? What great reformer of Old Testament times does John the Baptist resemble? What other great reformers did we hear about in the first three Quarters' lessons? In what words did they call upon the people to repent? What was Zacharias told in the temple that his son should be and do?

The Coming of Elijah in John the Baptist. There were a faithful few, righteous and devout, in the first quarter of the first century A. D. Among them, as we have seen, were Zacharias and Elisabeth, Joseph and Mary, Simeon and Anna, but for the great mass of people religion had become only an empty form. The return of Elijah, as prophesied by Malachi, was needed to arouse the people and to herald the coming of the Day of the Lord. Elijah came in John, the son of the priest Zacharias. In his early life John had abundant opportunity to become well acquainted with the faults of the Pharisees and with the hopes and fears of his nation. At what age he withdrew to the barren Judean hills overlooking the Dead Sea, we know not, but here he spent some time in solitude, his food locusts and wild honey, his raiment of camel's hair fastened by a leathern girdle. At the age of thirty probably, for a man seldom entered public life before that age, in the year 26, he felt impelled by Divine leading to come forth and sound his trumpet calls of warning. Priest and peasant alike recognized him as a man sent from God, and all men were musing in their hearts whether or not he were the Christ, and were ready so to acclaim him if he would but say the word. From the Fourth Gospel we learn that members of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem were so disturbed over the reports that came to them about John that they appointed a special committee to go to him and secure officially his denial that he was the Christ.

The Date. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar that John came preaching and baptizing, Luke tells us. Augustus died in 14 A. D., but three years earlier Tiberius was associated with him and had equal authority in the government of the provinces, hence the fifteenth year of his reign is reckoned from 11 A. D., making the date of John's preaching 26 A. D.

The Place. The region round the Jordan, where John was preaching and baptizing, includes the district on both sides of the Lower Jordan. This same region was the hiding-place of the prophet Elijah, as we learned in our First Quarter's lessons.

Assign paragraph 54 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

All your pupils will remember from their earlier training that John the Baptist wore a girdle of camel's hair and lived on locusts and wild honey. But

few have learned to regard him as a prophet greatly to be admired for his insight into Jesus's mission, and for his fearlessness and his humility, and to appreciate the great service he rendered in making it easy for Jesus to begin his ministry.

A London writer suggests this excellent way of developing the lesson. Begin by talking about conscience. Picture a man who is all conscience, never pretending, never excusing, never afraid. Make a story of what would happen if such a man visited your own town. Picture the unveilings, the discoveries, the tremblings. Then give this embodied conscience a name. It is John the Baptist.

Next, picture the messenger who brings great news of the approaching visit of a conqueror. How people crowd round the only person who can tell them about the expected visitor. How the excitement grows! "Tell us again what he is like," they say. "Is he really coming?" Then suppose the messenger cries: "Put up no flags. That is not what he wants. Make your streets clean. Let every window be burnished. Let every torn garment be sewn, every dirty face washed, let every lounger get to work. That is the only way to please him who is coming." This, again, would be a John the Baptist of the outward things. The real John the Baptist had a far harder task to teach people to cleanse their hearts, their lips, their habits, so as to be ready for the Christ.

The practical application of the lesson is the demand for reality. Children are tempted to all manner of petty pretences. Make them ashamed of them. Show them the shining glory of being true.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
REPENTANCE: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

Beginning the Lesson. The babe whose coming had been heralded to Zacharias by Gabriel was himself to be the herald of the Most High, to go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways. Today we see him as the forerunner of the Messiah. The impression which his words made upon the people who flock to hear him, aristocrats and peasants alike, may be compared to that made upon Queen Elizabeth's ambassador by John Knox: "The voice of him stirred me more than five hundred trumpets," said the ambassador.

Dr. Alexander Maclaren says of John's message: "It is summed up in two sentences: the call to repentance, and the rousing proclamation that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In the former he but reproduces the tone of earlier prophecy, when he insists on a thorough change of disposition and a true sorrow for sin. But he advances far beyond his precursors in the latter, which is the reason for repentance. They had seen the vision of the kingdom and the king, 'but not nigh.' He has to peal into the drowsy ears of a generation which had most forgotten the ancient hope, that it was at the very threshold. Like some solitary stern crag which catches the light of the sun yet unrisen but hastening upwards, long before the shadowed valleys, John flamed above his generation all aglow with the light, as the witness that in another moment it would spring above the eastern horizon."

The Nature of Repentance. "In repentance is man purified: it is the grand Christian act," says Carlyle. It may truly enough be called the grand Christian act in the sense that everything depends on it, and that religion begins its perfect work there. There are perhaps grander Christian acts than repentance, but without it none of them is possible. It is not life itself, but it is the gate to life, the portal through which the soul must pass into the Father's House. All spiritual religion must begin with repentance. All the prophets prefaced their message with a call to repentance. In New Testament times when John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, he preached saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The first report also of our Lord's work is, "Jesus preached, Repent ye and believe the gospel." And when the disciples were sent forth on the first apostolic mission, "they went out and preached that men should repent."

The call to repentance has been, and must be, the method of preaching of all ages. We all accept it as a doctrine of religion, but the word, like all other words that express a great spiritual truth, is a wide word, capable of being very loosely used in many senses of varying degrees of meaning.

The Schoolmen used to resolve repentance into three elements, all three neces-

sary, the omission of any one of them destroying the worth of penitence—contrition, confession, satisfaction. Dante symbolizes these three elements in the three steps which led up to the entrance-gate of Purgatory, where stood the Warder-angel with the drawn sword. As Purgatory is the place where the soul is to be shriven and cleansed, we see how appropriate it is that the three steps of repentance should be planted at the gate. When the Warder had invited them to enter and pass over the steps,

> Thither did we draw nigh, and that first stair
> Was of white marble, polished so and clean,
> It mirrored all my features as they were.
> The second darker than dusk pers was seen,
> Of stone all rugged, rough and coarse in grain,
> With many a crack its length and breadth between.
> The third, which o'er the others towers amain,
> Appeared as if of fiery porphyry.
> Like blood that gushes crimson from the vein.

The triple stair stands for the three steps of penitence—first, *contrition,* when a man sees himself as he really is, as Dante saw himself mrirored in the white marble. The second step is *confession,* which lays bare the heart black as the rugged stone, cracked and broken and coarse. The fiery porphyry stone is the third step, *satisfaction,* the love all afire to offer itself up, to atone even at the price of blood for the sake of the "blood of price" shed upon the cross.

(1) Repentance implies contrition, sorrow and shame for the past. When the heart awakes to the sense of sin, it is broken and torn with remorse and self-loathing. The whole literature of religion is full of this sorrow. We can hear today, after all the centuries, the sob and the wail in the Penitential Psalms. In all repentance there is this self-accusing pain, grief for a misspent past, an anguish of regret at the folly, something of the sense of guilt and self-loathing which made Job say, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Contrition is never absent from repentance, sorrow for sin; and yet sorrow is not repentance. To grieve is not necessarily to repent. There may be even a sense of guilt and self-contempt without any sanctifying influence. Repentance implies sorrow, but sorrow is easier than repentance. The sorrow may maunder on in weak self-pity, a helpless regret that can neither forget the past nor redeem the future. The root of it may be only a fear of punishment, or a vague apprehension of danger; and if that fear were removed the life would bound back into the old careless security. There is no innate moral power in the sorrow. Repentance means that the moral springs of life and action are touched, purifying the motives, and driving the life into a new and higher sphere.

(2) Again, as repentance implies contrition and yet sorrow is not repentance; so repentance implies confession and yet confession is not repentance. Confession of sin is the natural expression of the sense of sin. The truly penitent heart will be eager to unburden itself, to acknowledge the wrongdoing. Sorrow naturally finds issue in confession both to God and before men—especially before men who may have been wronged. Confession is before absolution: it is the way to forgiveness. "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." At the same time confession is not repentance. Like contrition, confession is easier than repentance. We only need to think of the common temptation to look upon a general confession of sinfulness as if it could take the place of particular and specific amendment. Men will confess to all the sins, before they will admit any faults, and while they nod assent to being called sinners, in the mass, they find it easy to make themselves out saints in detail. We never have public worship without confession of sin in some form or other; and yet we know the immense distinction between that and evangelical repentance.

(3) The third element, and the third of Dante's triple stairs, is satisfaction, or better (to avoid the chance of error from the theological word) *amendment.* This is the proof and fruit of repentance. It is the test of the genuineness of the sorrow for sin and of confession. Repentance must work itself out in ethical life, in sincere endeavor after new obedience, if it is to possess any spiritual power—otherwise the contrition is only an emotion and the confession is

only a form. This is the demand of religion. "Amend your ways and your doings" is Jeremiah's translation of the call to repentance. But here again amendment is not repentance. There may be outward reformation without any change of affections or will or heart. Repentance implies satisfaction, but satisfaction of a kind, or amendment, is easier than repentance. There is an external conformity which apes the fruits of the Spirit, but with no heart in it, no love, no communion, no prayer, no vital faith, no deep religious life.

What can plough the heart, so that contrition becomes grief and hatred of sin, and vitalize confession till it becomes the uncovering of soul to God, and inspire satisfaction that moves with haste and joy to the will of God? Here we are at the very root of evangelical religion. It is not the price of blood which we must pay, but the blood of price which has been paid. There is nothing which so moves the conscience and leads to repentance like the preaching of Christ crucified. The Cross which heals us wounds us. It is the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it, which induces true grief and hatred of sin, and impels to full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience. Nothing will break down the barriers of self-will and melt the stubborn heart and leave the whole soul soft to the touch of the creative God but the spectacle of his deathless love. When we apprehend the mercy of God in Christ, we are pierced to the quick, and know full well that men should repent.—Condensed from Listening to God, by Dr. Hugh Black.

Repentance is a Work of God in the Heart of the Penitent, as well as an Attitude of the Heart of the Penitent toward God.

He was a lowly mortal, stained by sin,
On whom men looked with scorn, scarce pitying,
Until one dared to stoop and enter in
The charnel cave of his base thoughts, and wring
A slow repentance by the power of love
The Master lent him from his throne above.
A slow repentance, then a great delight
Broke in upon that ignominious soul,
Till all affrighted at the wondrous sight
Of the transforming love which seemed to roll
In mighty billows round and over him,
He sank into the shadows old and grim.
Fearful he sank. How could he share the clean,
The holy life of God—who was so vile?
Till in his ear the voice of Faith, serene,
Bade him be comforted, again to smile;
For in repenting he who seemed a clod
Had moved with joy the mighty heart of God.

—Dr. Ethelbert D. Warfield.

Bring forth Fruits Worthy of Repentance. I was preaching in British Columbia some years ago, and a young man came to me and wanted to become a Christian. He had been smuggling opium into the United States.

"Well, my friend," I said, "I don't think there is any chance for you to become a Christian until you make restitution." He said, "If I attempt to do that, I will fall into the clutches of the law, and I will go to the penitentiary." "Well," I replied, "you had better do that than go to the judgment seat of God with that sin upon your soul and have eternal punishment. The Lord will be very merciful if you set your face to do right."

He went away very sorrowful, but came back next day, and said: "I have a wife and a young child, and all the furniture in my house I have bought with money that I have earned in this dishonest way. If I become a Christian, that furniture will have to go, and my wife will know it."

"Better let your wife know it, and better let your home and furniture go."

"Would you come up and see my wife?" he asked. "I don't know what she will say."

I went up to see her, and when I told her, the tears trickled down her cheeks, and she said, "Mr. Moody, I will gladly give everything if my husband will become a Christian." She took out her pocketbook and handed over her last penny. He had a piece of land in the United States which he deeded to the Government. As I look back over my life I do not recall any living man who

had a better testimony for Jesus Christ than that man. He had been dishonest, but when the truth came to him that he must make it right with God, he made it right.

No amount of weeping over sin and saying that you feel sorry is going to help it unless you are willing to confess and make restitution.—D. L. Moody.

For Discussion. 1. Let us learn to tolerate the man with a vision, even if he be clothed in camel's hair and insist on eating wild honey. The men whose voices ring out among the crags of the wilderness are after all, the true forerunners of the Messiah. Until the man of the dream does come, the man with a hoe, the man with a purse, and the man with a pen sit helpless and useless. The men who disturb the smooth surface of life are often Divinely sent. The men who are sure of their conviction can always afford to listen to the man whose convictions are different. As James Russell Lowell says, "The universe of God is fireproof, and it is quite safe to strike a match."—Dr. W. F. P. Faunce.

2. The kind of preaching that is needed to stir men's hearts today.

3. The ministry of John the Baptist. See chapter 7 of The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. John's baptism was "of repentance unto the remission of sins": since Jesus was sinless, why was he baptized? 2. What is the connection between his baptism and his temptation? 3. Why after his baptism would Jesus naturally wish to be alone? 4. Why was Jesus tempted? 5. Is temptation sin? 6. What is temptation? 7. What is the meaning of the first temptation? 8. Jesus afterwards fed others who hungered in a desert place; why would it not have been right for him to use his power for himself? 9. What is the meaning of the second temptation? 10. Name some temptations to the misuse of power today. 11. What is the meaning of the third temptation? 12. What is said in Heb. 2.17,18; 4.15 about Jesus's temptation? 13. Read Paradise Regained, III, 251. 14. What does 1 Cor. 10.13 say about our temptations? 15. Give an example of the way in which each of the three temptations of Jesus comes to us.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A FEARLESS REFORMER

Beginning the Lesson. Emerging from his wilderness retreat, clad in his strange attire, spare in build, his features sharp and worn with fasting, his long, dishevelled hair telling of his Nazirite vow, John the Baptist moves down to the Jordan like an apparition. His appearance is everywhere hailed with mingled curiosity and delight. Crowds come in ever-increasing numbers, not one class only, but all classes—priests, soldiers, officials, people—until it seemed as if the cities had emptied themselves into the Jordan Valley. And what went they "out for to see"? "A reed shaken with the wind"? A prophesier of smooth things? A preacher of revolt against tyranny? Nay; John was no wind-shaken reed; he was rather the heavenly wind itself, swaying the multitudes at will, and bending hearts and consciences into penitence and prayer. The one burden of his message was, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But the effect was marvellous. Judæa, Samaria, even distant Galilee felt the quiver of the strange voice, and even from the shore of the northern sea men came to sit at the feet of the new teacher, and to call themselves John's disciples. It was a genuine revival of religion, such as Judæa had not witnessed since the days of Ezra, the awaking of the national conscience and of the national hope.—Henry Burton, in Expositor's Bible.

The Lesson Story. Let two pupils recite from memory, one the part of the Priest and the other that of John, in Longfellow's poem entitled Vox Clamantis. It is Part One of the First Passover, in The Divine Tragedy.

A Fearless Reformer. In this new prophet, John, the slumbering conscience of Israel had awakened—become incarnate. He was the hand of God knocking at the door of the nation's heart, terrifying self-complacency into flight, laying the national soul, naked and quivering, face to face with its moral failure to be the trustee of the blessing that was to be for all the nations of the world. Doubtless a familiar saying of the time was recalled: "If all Israel would only repent for one day the Promised Deliverer would appear." It used to be whispered only with a pious sigh. But here in the face of the onward-sweeping wave of repentance that gathered volume as it went, it would now be

passed from lip to lip with expectant awe. Close by where John stood in the stream and laved the endless procession of the penitents, they could see the scene where, in the ancient story, the prophet Elijah had parted the waters of Jordan with his garment, passed over, and been taken up in the chariot of fire. Many a Pascal eve they had left the door of their homes wide open, hoping for his return. And possibly now excited groups of watchers stood and scanned the sky, fancying that at any moment he might appear along the way by which he had gone. And still the Baptiser stood and cried, "Make straight, make straight the way of the Lord." Only a universal national repentance could create the condition in which the Messiah would appear.—J. A. Robertson, in The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus.

Other Fearless Preachers. Recall the words of the fearless preachers of Old Testament times, which we studied during the first three Quarters, of Elijah, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

True and Spurious Repentance. The repentance of the multitude looked toward punishment, not toward amendment. The only way they could prove the sincerity of their repentance was by their after-conduct, the fruits that were worthy of repentance. They might acknowledge their sins, they might even mourn because of them, and be baptized in token of their repentance, but if their subsequent lives were not changed the repentance had not been genuine. John's word to the multitude is voiced by Shakespeare in the familiar words—

> A true repentance shuns the evil itself
> More than the eternal suffering or the shame.

There is a wide difference between being penitent because one has done wrong and being penitent because one has suffered the consequences of wrong doing. A man who had stolen a pair of shoes and had been convicted, some time afterwards met the lawyer who had defended him. "Squire, the taking of those shoes was the worst job I ever did," he acknowledged. So far this sounds like penitence. But the man kept on. "Yes, I didn't keep 'em only a week, and then they put me in jail. I gave you the only horse I had to defend me; my crop was lost 'cause I couldn't see to it; and then, Squire, they gave me thirty-nine lashes at last. I tell you, Squire, it was a bad speculation."

Dr. Grenfell has seen new men made out of old men on the coast of Labrador, the wrecks of humanity changed into genuine Christians. One time he was talking with a dying man on board a tiny schooner, and asked him if the years since the change took place in him had been testified to by his life. In the most natural way in the world the man was able to answer, "I wish you'd ask my skipper, Doctor."

A small girl was once shut up in a room by herself and told to stay there till she could say she was sorry for what she had done. After a while the door was slowly opened, and the child stood on the threshold but did not speak. "What do you want to say?" questioned her mother. "Nothing, only just that I'm sorry enough to have the door left open." Was she repentant?

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Repentance is regret made manifest in reformation.—William George Jordan.

The only amends for the past which we can make will be to add to the past no more past for which amends are needed.—Dr. Robert E. Speer.

> Repentance is heart's sorrow,
> And a clear life ensuing.—Shakespeare

Pupils' Note-Book Work. III. The Ministry of John the Baptist told in dialogue form.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of the baptism of Jesus. 2. Contrast John in this scene of the baptism with John in our last lesson. 3. Why was Jesus baptized? 4. Why are people baptized today? 5. Where did Jesus go after his baptism, and why did he go there? 6. What is the first story about temptation told in the Bible? 7. What is temptation? 8. What was the first temptation that Jesus met? 9. What did his answer mean? 10. What was another temptation that came to him and how did he meet it? 11. What is the meaning of the last temptation? 12. Which temptation of Jesus's answer refutes our proverb that "The end justifies the means"? 13. Is there any one to whom temptation never comes? 14. What are some of the temptations which come to a boy? 15. To a girl?

JESUS TEMPTED

Golden Text

In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. Hebrews 2.18

LESSON Luke 4.1-30 DEVOTIONAL READING Hebrews 4.14 to 5.10

REFERENCE MATERIAL Philippians 2.5-11; Hebrews 2.14-18; 4.14-16

LUKE 4.1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness 2 during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread. 4 And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. 5 And he led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee:

11 and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE SCENE OF THE TEMPTATION, verses 1,2. Yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit, who had come to him in a special way at his baptism, Jesus went from the Jordan into the wilderness, there to meditate undisturbed upon the work God had given him to do. "Jesus had begun his life ignorant of his nature and his destiny, an unthinking Infant. He had 'grown in wisdom and stature.' He had gradually attained, in thirty years of education, in work and in thought, to a clear conception of his mission, of the career that lay before him and its ultimate issue. Such a career can be entered on only by one who has fully weighed it all, and counted the cost, and voluntarily, deliberately, with his eyes open, taken on him the burden of that great and terrible life and death. During that period in which Jesus was contemplating in the solitude of the desert the life that lay before him, an alternative presented itself to his mind, and exercised a certain attraction on him, but was decisively rejected. He was tempted to swerve from the career he had chosen, but his firm resolve proved superior to the temptation" (W. R. Ramsey). The *forty days* may be here used as "a round number," representing a long period of time. As the story is told in Mark, Jesus seems to have waged his great struggle throughout his wilderness sojourn, although as told in Matthew and Luke these specific temptations seem to have come at the end of the period. Jesus himself must have related this experience, for in no other way could it have become known. No one can believe that to have listened to the words of the devil in person, knowing that they were of the evil one, would have been any temptation to Jesus. We have the account as Jesus gave it of a conflict which took place in his mind, an inner, spiritual struggle—pictured by a series of fitting images which his followers would understand.

II. THE TEMPTATION TO USE POWER FOR SELFISH ENDS, TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE LIMITATIONS OF HIS HUMANITY, verses 3,4. In his hunger the temptation came to him to secure food by working a miracle. *If thou are the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread,* is the way the temptation is voiced by the devil. The word *if* may be taken in the sense of *since:* Since you know you have the power—he had just been assured of this at the baptism—why not make use of it for yourself? The question which Jesus had to settle was, should he look out for himself, or should he trust his Father and accept whatever suffering his Father might send? His answer was, Thou shalt trust. If we recall the setting of the quotation from Deuteronomy which he uses as it is given in full in Matthew—*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,*—we see that his meaning is: The Israelites were hungry and were fed by the word of God, for he commanded his manna to fall; so I, who am hungry, may be miraculously fed if it is his will; my part is to trust to his providence, not to my own. Throughout his ministry, Jesus never once used for his own advantage his power to work a miracle. "Compare his exercise of supernatural power as told in the Gospels, with the fanciful stories of the Arabian Nights, where a man had a lamp which he might rub and command anything he pleased. What an immeasurable difference there is between the two! And yet the secret of the difference is in the moral mastery of Jesus, who would use his power only to help and to save, even if he himself were poor and hungry. To have yielded to this temptation would have meant moral and spiritual defeat. He could thus have exempted himself from all the normal conditions of life and gone through the world seeming to share with us and yet never sharing at all. More than that, such a temptation once yielded to would have returned again and again with redoubled force, until at last we should have had, instead of a Christ who did everything for others and never lifted his hand for himself, a Christ who always satisfied himself, doing nothing for others—that means no Christ at all" (Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins).

III. THE TEMPTATION TO ESTABLISH AN EARTHLY RATHER THAN A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM, verses 5-8. At this time the Jews were chafing under the Roman yoke. They expected a Messiah who would free them and establish an earthly kingdom greater than that of their father David. All his countrymen would rally to his side if he adopted the rôle of a temporal Messiah: for such a Messiah they would sacrifice their lives freely and gladly. What might Jesus accomplish if he yielded to their expectations and established an earthly kingdom! The devil *showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. All this authority, and the glory of them* might be his—if he would pay the price. Would it not be a quicker and easier road to travel than the road to Calvary? To seek temporary instead of eternal good, to build up a material instead of a spiritual kingdom, would be to ally himself with the devil, to *worship before* him. *But it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Said Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, in an address to newly-appointed Bishops: "The temptation of your new office will not lie in the coarser regions. The wrong appeal may be made to you, not in the realm of bodily cravings in the desert, nor yet in the way of appeal to cheap sensationalism on the temple pinnacle, but rather in the high mountain experience of ambition for power. There are few tests of character finer or more revealing than the way in which power is used."

IV. THE TEMPTATION TO PRESUME UPON GOD'S CARE, verses 9-12. The world was always asking for a "sign" of his Sonship, and conscious as he was of his oneness with the Father, there came to Jesus the thought that by throwing himself off from a high place and compelling his Father to guard him from harm, he could at the outset of his ministry win the world's faith in him as the Messiah. *Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God* was his answer to the temptation. "'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and *no* sign shall be given it.' Why not? Why did he prefer the slow, laborious, hazardous, often inefficient method of teaching, of living, and of the cross? He did so because that only was the true method. To leap unhurt from a pinnacle of the temple was to rival a mountain goat or a chamois, but it had no connection at all with spiritual power and was no sign of disposition and ability to save men from their sins. To abandon the region of men's actual needs and work wonders, not for their relief but for mere display, was to tres-

pass against the Father's love and to mistake the Father's intentions" (Dr. Marcus Dods).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Command this stone, that it become bread, verse 7. Oriental bread is made in small, thin, flat loaves, or cakes, and many of the stones lying about in the wilderness resembled them in shape. The sight of the stones may have increased the pangs of hunger. The Jews were looking for a Messiah who would perform just such a miracle as that of turning stones into bread. The rabbis said that when he came the trees would bear fruit the year round, and a single grape would load a wagon and from it men would draw wine as from a cask.

He led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, verse 5. "A man will take a visitor to the roof of his house in Palestine today to show him the beautiful view, declaring as he does so that 'We can see the whole world from the top of my house.'"

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Messiah Consecrated. Eighteen years had passed since the visit of Jesus to the temple at twelve years of age, when early in the summer of 27 A. D., when John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing, Jesus left his Nazareth home and came to John to be baptized. He was then a Man of thirty. Baptism and temptation were parts of one experience. In the one Jesus received his call to consecration; in the other, he considered the nature of the call, the way it must be accomplished, and the goal to which it would ultimately lead him.

The Place. From his home in Nazareth Jesus went eastward to the Jordan and then fifteen miles down the eastern side of the valley to Bethany beyond Jordan—if the scholars are correct in identifying this site as the place where John was baptizing. The traditional site is at the ford opposite Jericho. Here there is a heap of ruins whose Arabic name means the Monastery of St. John, and here on the sixth of January, the day held sacred by the oriental church as the anniversary of Jesus's baptism, crowds come annually to bathe in the river.

The Wilderness of Judea

The wilderness to which Jesus withdrew immediately after the baptism is the desolate, hilly region west of the northern end of the Dead Sea.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Each one's reaction to temptation depends somewhat upon his *desires.* "It's not to my credit that I never swear," said a friend. "Profanity has no temptation for me." It depends largely upon *habits,* even in small matters. Before the war a young man might envy his neighbor his pocket full of money, but it never occurred to him to take it by force. When the habit of using firearms and force had been acquired, on his return home the temptation to rob proved irresistible. It depends much upon the tone of the *public opinion* to which one is exposed. A boy who once was never ill-mannered for fear of the disapproval of his parents became so on entering school, even against his personal inclination, for fear of the criticism of his new mates. It depends partly upon *the ideal* that sits enthroned in the imagination. These ideals modify conduct

more than we often realize. A boy of seven, sent from a refined home to school met there on the playground a picturesque figure that attracted his admiring attention—a bandit of ten. On the evening of his first day's attendance the little fellow horrified his parents by swaggering, spitting, bullying his little sister, and using strange adjectives. The habits of seven years seemed overthrown in one hour. And it took six months of positive training, after his removal from school, to eradicate from his mind the pattern that had thus captivated him.

Now the Sunday-school teacher cannot seek directly to control the individual tendencies of pupils: they were set by heredity; nor to change the habits which have been set by early training; nor the tone caused by public opinion, which is controlled by conditions largely economic. What he can seek to do is to enthrone a controlling ideal.

This is why it is so important to present Jesus as a positive, constructive ideal. He came to do the world good, to lead us in our battle with evil. In his temptation he is our Exemplar. All that is heroic is in imitation of him. And the thought of Jesus as our Ideal should always be accompanied by the thought of his actual presence with us now. Horatius at the Bridge, Peter at the Dyke, Luther before the Diet, *were;* Jesus *is.*

"I can swim all the way to the raft," says a timid swimmer, "if father swims beside me. I may not need his help, but I like to feel that he is there." The will to righteousness is strengthened by a belief in the efficacy of prayer.

The important work, then, of the Sunday-school teacher is to give to his pupils (1) a positive, inspiring vision of an active, powerful, benignant Christ, present now, and able and willing to help, and (2) to see that this vision is not viewed with idle admiration but with a spirit of active aspiration and worshipful emulation.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
WHAT CHRIST'S VICTORY MEANS TO US

Beginning the Lesson. In a large men's meeting recently a pastor invited all present to voice the objections to Christianity that they or others held. As some twenty-seven different objections were given, the pastor wrote them down. "Church members are no better than others. Their lives are inconsistent," was the first one. "Yes, that's too true! Church members are not what they ought to be," was the pastor's acknowledgment. "The ministers are not what they should be," came next, and to that, too, the minister agreed. "Too many hypocrites in the church," "The rich men's club," "Christians don't believe the Bible any more," and so on. After an hour devoted to this purpose, the minister folded up his paper and said: "Men, you have objected to us pastors, to the church, to church members, to the Bible and other things, *but you have not said a word against my Master!*" And then he preached to them Jesus Christ, the Faultless One.

"As the Greek poet Simonides has said: 'It is hard to show oneself a good man': and this remarkable narrative before us today reveals to us that the same difficulty which besets all men had to be surmounted by Jesus, the Sinless One. It was not without a struggle—a process of temptation and the resisting of temptation—that he finally chose the good and refused the less good."

Discovery and Acceptance of God's Call. Shall we then draw near in deepest reverence for a moment to this scene, to listen with the inner ear a-strain, as this Man, visited afresh—as the opening words of the first two temptations show—with the overwhelming consciousness of a unique Sonship with God, wrestles inwardly in this solitary place with the dark Mystery of Apostasy, the Spirit of the World? Brokenly and obscurely, for our ears are dull, we catch an echo of the low and fervent words that break spasmodic from his lips in the soliloquy of the struggle (or shall we call it the argument of two opposing personal forces?).

"Son of God! I am the Son of God, owned as such by my Father once again!" The words were singing in his heart through the long rapture so profound that bodily needs were transcended and forgot.

"Oh, this measureless Power. . . . Made mine in the waters of Jordan! Yet not for myself, but that I might give it to the world. . . . The world that so needs God! The world that calls!"

A momentary silence falls, then with a weary sigh he speaks again.

"I am anhungered. . . . Dawns and sunsets—how many!—have passed me

unawares. . . . The Son of God. And the Father hath put all things into my hands."

"Make these stones bread!" It comes like a voice from without, a distant murmur falling on his ear,—the voice of the calling World, the world that God desired, the multitude for whom this Power had been given to him in trust. To bring in the Kingdom of God to such a world as this must surely mean to banish every kind of want from men.

There is a moment of irresolution, as the murmur dies away. Then the single thread of silver speech flows on again.

"Build the Kingdom of my Father in the world by pandering to mere physical craving in myself or others? Refuse to taste the pain and finitude of human life? Listen, perchance, some day, to the voice of prudence arguing so reasonably, so plausibly: Save thyself if thou wouldst save thy gospel? That cannot be God's way for me. I have lived these days above the need of food—wrapt away from earth by the whispered words of my Father in my heart, and yet I find that I am not immune from hunger. Even as the children of this generation find their earthly bread, so must I find mine; my sacramental meat shall be to do the will,—obey the word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. And if ever that word should lead me to a place where danger threatens my physical existence, still I must obey. . . . Thou hast humbled me, and suffered me to hunger, and fed me with manna which I knew not, neither did my fathers know, that I might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live. Yea, 'tis thus his Kingdom must be founded among men,—by the voice of God's spirit, uttered through my soul, and passed from heart to heart. I dare not listen to the world's gross clamor of sense, nor found the Kingdom by appeals to bodily gratification. I dare not be a Bread-Messiah. I must wait for the answer of the human soul, wakened at length to the Spirit that would speak to it through me. Ah, here alone lies man's true life, the life that God would give—through me."

So with a word from the ancient law he thrusts the temptation from him.

"My Son! My Son! In thee I am well-pleased": the beatific melody comes floating back and repeats itself within his heart again. And the soliloquy is resumed. "The object of my Father's deepest love; and all the riches of his Power at my command! . . . Spirits of the Unseen, I may bid you come and go! Demons, I am your Master! The Messiah! Chief servant in the bringing of the Kingdom! 'Tis my duty to assert my claim before the world. . . . But how?"

Another pause, and through the stillness comes a confused murmur, heard as from without, the voice of the Spirit of the World again—a demonic voice, yet all in the garb and tones of sanctity this time, speaking the very language of Holy Writ, prompting and suggesting close at hand. The vision changes, and the rock on which he sits on the steep hillside shapes itself on his fancy as the temple's cornerstone. And from the shadowy courts below the sound creeps up, tumult of priest, and scribe, and Pharisee, of pious superstition, legal arrogance, and spurious dream.

"A sign! A sign!" they clamor. "Thou art of Nazareth. Thy cradle and thy home were lowly. If thou be the Son of God, then demonstrate thy claim. Summon the angels to sustain thee. Is not the promise written? Come! Fling thyself down!"

"What? Shall I thus confirm my Messianic commission,—silence the priest and scribe,—win the gaping wonder of the superstitious throng,—startle men into faith? . . . But what kind of faith? . . . Presume on the laws of the Supernal Power entrusted to me? Nay, the true way of God's Anointed is surely the way of self-effacement, stealing into men's hearts by unobtrusive gentleness, by human sympathy and love. Only along the pathway of the humble shall I keep company with my God, my lowly-hearted, my Eternal Father. . . . Tempt God! Force his hand,—strain his complacency in me to breaking-point by sensational self-glory? Away with the thought! I will make no vain claim, nor sustain it on an empty wonder. If I cannot live in lowly obedience, I do not wish men to confess my right to be *the Son;* but I *will* obey, I will not tempt God."

Again, with a severe rebuking word from the ancient law he thrusts the impious suggestion from his mind.

He passes at length in fancy out into the presence of all the nations of the world, men from the East and West and North and South for whom this Kingdom was Divinely destined,—not for Israel alone. And mingling with the vision come impressions of the vast World-Power that had flung the conqueror's shield across so many kingdoms, and cast its shadow even on his people's holiest shrine.

"Power? World-power? Yes, I too seek for that,—a world-wide sway for my Father's Kingdom. That is his purpose—and my dream. The restoration of the throne of David! The prophets longed for it. The people wait for it. Yea, a throne whose scepter shall stretch out towards 'the islands of the sea'! And ever since that liberating hour at Jordan I have been conscious of haunting, heavenly power. With such gifts from God,—all human qualities transfigured by the Spirit's dower,—I may climb, if I choose, by easy strides to the world's throne by the world's ways . . . ."

And as from a lofty mountain-top the while he mused he saw the kingdoms with their glory pass before his eyes. And a presence, shadowy, sinister, colossal, seemed to shape itself more sharply now against the growing gloom.

"The World's throne! . . . But by the ways of the spirit of the World? By the way of self-assertion, egoistic aggrandizement, the way of the conqueror, controlling the movements of vast hosts of men? . . . What? Capitulate to the Earth Spirit, yield homage and allegiance to the 'Prince of the power of the air'? . . . Whose then would the world be when I had won it? 'Twould be but the possession of him to whom I had sold my soul and its gift Divine—a slave! Get thee behind me, Satan! Let me in lowly reverence wait on God. Let me take the way, not of material brute force, directed and controlled by self, but of heavenly power flowing from the fount of love. And if love mean sacrifice and sorrow,—if that be the price of spiritual victory—God's will be done. Him only must I serve."

Thus the two paths confronted him for choice in the fulfilling of his vocation,—both of them paths to power, but one debased, materialized by self, and one transfigured, sanctified by love. With unfailing insight and unfaltering will he chose the latter. No paltering with bribery, sensationalism, or compromise! Not one step along the way of earthly self-security, the un-divine ascendency won by self-display, the short-cut way of forceful self-assertion. But the way of self-surrender to the Will and Word of God, the way of self-effacement and of sacrifice.

So the devil left him, exhausted but a Conqueror, Lord of himself—at rest.—J. A. Robertson, in The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus.

The Purpose of the Temptation. A part of the purpose of our Lord's temptation must be in its power of example and influence for us. He was the Leader of men in the new life, and so he must go the way that they would have to go. If mankind were to be led into the city of God, it might be by an angel flying overhead, clear above all the tops of the trees through which they had to force their way, out of sound of the roaring torrents they had got to cross; or it might be by a Man walking before them, planting his feet first in the pathless ways where the serpents might be lurking, wetting his foot first in every cold stream that his followers would have to ford. Millions of men who would have lost sight of the Angel will follow the Fellow-Man.—Phillips Brooks.

How We may Overcome Temptation. Our Lord did not resist sin by the power of his Godhead that could not sin; but with the power of his humanity, by the exertion of his human will strengthened by the action of the Holy Spirit. As the presence of the Divine did not counteract the weakness of the flesh, but he issued from his trial weak and fainting; so his human will went through the lonely struggle with the tempter, making use of the grace of God.

All that grace is ours. We enter all our struggles hopefully because we feel that the omnipotence of God is behind us. No power of evil has any strength against the soul that is loyal to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We walk in the painful footsteps of Jesus; but we walk not alone; Jesus is walking with us.—Dr. J. G. H. Barry, in The Christian's Day.

Our Great Helper. There must be a jaw-locked determination not to yield to temptation. With greatest reverence, be it said that the Lord Jesus alone without our wills is not enough. He works through the man's will. There must be a will, and there must be more—a Savior, too, a Friend, a Helper. Neither one nor the other, but the one and the other. If this wondrous Victor

of the Wilderness and of Calvary be not allowed to help, there will be a French Waterloo in your life. And the French never talk about their Waterloo. They are a bit busy if that topic is suggested. There is no Waterloo on the famous Napoleon Monument in Paris. The sculptor had a convenient lapse of memory just then. The greatest battle was omitted. If you will allow this great human Savior, who was Divine, too, to come alongside and help, there will be an English Waterloo in your life. Every temptation is a chance for a victory. It is a signal to fly the flag of our Victor. It is a chance to make the tempter know anew that he is defeated.—Dr. S. D. Gordon in Quiet Talks about the Tempter.

A Prayer for Strength in Temptation. Strong Son of God, who became our Savior through the stern discipline of thy manifold temptations, in thy presence is our refuge and hope. We are ever calling upon thee for aid, and thou art ever offering thyself to us in grace and strength and infinite understanding. Yet there is no moment when thou art more near to us than when we feel the promptings and lure of evil. Thou wert tempted in all points like as we are. Thou knowest how frail are our wills, how easily baffled and ensnared are our judgments, and how inconstant are our loyalties. It is in thy knowledge of our weakness that we find strength, and in thy triumph over just such temptations as we face that we keep renewing our hope of victory for ourselves.

Go with us, thou comrade of the spirit, into our lonely wilderness, that we may meet our adversary in thy company. And walk with us amid the crowd in the city's streets, that we may have a Defender against the wiles of evil and a Strong Tower from the foe. As thou didst share our struggle against all base promptings of the flesh, may we share thy courage, thy vision, thy soundness of soul, and thy perfect faithfulness to the Highest. May our comradeship with thee in our moral struggle rest upon the sure conviction of thine utter and most real humanity. Show us that all the resources that were open to thee are open to us, that God is near us as he was near to thee; and that angels wait around us to minister to us if we but yield our wills into the Father's hand.

Give us, in our humble degree, O Master, some clear sense of a divine commission for our lives like that with which thou wentest to thy temptation. As thou didst carry in thy heart the sin and hope of the world, may we meet our temptation with the strengthening thought that the destiny of other lives is staked upon our loyalty and our obedience to the heavenly vision. May no base or sordid act of ours hurt or befoul any innocent life or add to the burdens and weakness of others who lean upon or look up to us. Watch with us, O Lord, over the imaginings of our minds, lest we be surprised into some action that will not only overthrow our honor but bring shame and trouble upon those who trust us and whose love is the dearest treasure of our hearts. For thy name's sake. Amen.—The Christian Century.

For Discussion. 1. The firmness of Jesus. See chapter 15 of The Character of Jesus, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

2. Man shall not live by bread alone. Lord Haldane recently declared that the chief cause of the sense of separation between rich and poor arises, not so much over questions of wages and hours and social surroundings, as over chances of education. "The man who feels that he has it in him to have made a fuller use of the faculties that have been bestowed on him is embittered if he thinks that he has been denied the chance of doing so by not having had the training that has been lavished on many whom he sees to be by nature inferior to himself."

3. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins. "God does not supply angels where stairs are available."

4. Every life is a march *from* innocence, *through* temptation, *to* virtue or vice: there is no other way in which virtue can be won save by battle.—Dr. Abbott.

5. No degree of temptation justifies any degree of sin.—N. P. Willis.

6. You can judge a man by the size of his temptations. The devil never wastes his strength on anybody. When a heart's small and mean, he comes to it with small and mean temptations. When it's big and strong and aims high, then he puts out his awful power.—Tom Hawkey, in Old Delabole, by Eden Phillpotts.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do we have an annual World's Temperance Lesson? 2. From what chapters of the Bible are our temperance lessons usually taken? 3. Why do we

study Isaiah 61 today? 4. What are the facts as to the enforcement of prohibition in our land? 5. What effect has national prohibition had upon the reduction of crime? 6. Upon charities? 7. Upon efficiency in business? 8. Bank deposits? 9. Use of harmful drugs? 10. Rescue missions? 11. Hospitals? 12. Immigration? 13. Public health? 14. Municipal lodging houses? 15. Jails? 16. What has our community done to replace the saloon as the poor man's club? 17. Is World Prohibition likely? 18. When? 19. What progress has been made toward this end in recent years?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

Beginning the Lesson. A naturalist noticed a pair of birds busily flitting back and forth between an ash tree and their nest in an oak tree. Coming nearer, he saw that they were plucking the leaves of the ash and then weaving them around the outside of their nest. Could it be that they were doing this for adornment? As he stood watching he saw a snake slowly creeping down the tree where was the nest. Just as the serpent raised its head to seize its prey, it touched the encircling ash leaves, for which it has a great dislike, and at once relaxed its hold and dropped to the ground. The birds knew that the ash leaves would protect them from harm.

Satan is often spoken of as "that old serpent": why? In the story of the temptation of Jesus, Satan's attempt to harm Jesus by making him give up the highest good for lesser good, was frustrated by an encircling guard of Scripture words. How?

Jesus Overcoming Temptation. Let two pupils read the dialogue between Christus and Lucifer in Mount Quarantainia, Part II of the First Passover, The Divine Tragedy, by Longfellow.

An Illustration which Explains the Second Temptation. Sadhu Sundar Singh is a native of India who is a Christian and has recently been traveling and speaking in England. He was a lad of sixteen when he renounced the Sikh religion and openly professed Christianity. Every possible effort was made by his friends to win him back to their beliefs. One day his uncle, a very rich man, invited him to his beautiful home. Taking him down into the cellar the uncle opened a large safe and showed him priceless jewels and roll upon roll of bank notes—such as Sundar had never before seen. "All these shall be yours," vowed the uncle, "if you only will remain a Sikh." It was a great temptation, but Sundar was enabled to say "No."

An Illustration which Explains the Third Temptation. Professor Tyndall, in the interest of a scientific skepticism, once made a proposal to the religious world. He offered to subject the question of prayer's value to the test of experiment. He proposed to have two hospitals, each filled with sick people, the one the subject of prayer, the other not. If the one for which prayer was made turned out more convalescents than the other, it would be in favor of the Christian doctrine; if not, it would show the valuelessness of the whole process. Until I heard Professor Tyndall's proposal I never understood the meaning of the second temptation recorded by Matthew. The cases are almost identical. The tempter says to Jesus: "You can put the power of your faith to the test of a public experiment. Throw yourself from the heights before the eyes of the crowd, and let them see whether God will or will not keep his promise." In both cases a negative result was expected. And it was right to expect such a result, but not on the ground that the promise to answer is a delusion: the truth is, neither the hospital test nor the pinnacle test gave room for any prayer at all. It was not prayer for Divine care, but an experiment on God. You can experiment with wireless telegraphy without reference to the message, but not with prayer. The prayer is the message. Not the word, but the wish; not the sound, but the sympathy; not the kneeling, but the need, makes mine a prayer.—George Matheson.

Why a Boy Goes Wrong. While Mr. Thomas C. Richards was chaplain in a State Reform School, he gave the boys questionnaires at various times which they answered frankly. "Why does a boy go wrong?" "Why did you go wrong?" were the questions asked at one time. Nearly twenty-five per cent of the answers gave "temptation" as the cause. "Many temptations were too strong." "There were more temptations to go wrong than to go right." "Wrong got the better of me." "I can't get over the fight going on in my

heart by the right and wrong." "I was told to do it by an unseen enemy." "They get the devil into them."

"The boys felt that they were up against too many and hard temptations," Mr. Richards comments. "The forces within were not able to stand against such temptations. They felt that it was an unequal contest. They were conscious of a lack of moral stamina to meet the assaults against their wills. They plead guilty in a pathetic fashion. Temptation is a large word in their vocabulary."

What did these boys need?

The Scout's Patrol Song.

These are our regulations—
There's just one law for the Scout,
The first and last and present and past,
And the future and the perfect is, "Look out."—Kipling.

Be Prepared Ahead to Meet Temptation. Most of us, may I say, wait until we are tempted, and then, half-scared, seek for help. But we should always pray ahead, and watch ahead, and take the ground before the evil one can come.

At one time Mr. Moody was on an ocean liner, in a great storm, and they were sure the boat was going to the bottom. They were all praying; everybody prays in a bad storm, you know. A gentleman told about going to one of the decks, and to his great surprise he saw Mr. Moody standing on the deck, not in the prayer-meeting down below, but standing quietly looking out over the raging waters. And he said, "Why! Mr. Moody, why aren't you down in the prayer-meeting?" And in his quiet way Mr. Moody said, "Oh! I am prayed up." There is a marvellous generalship in praying ahead. We must not wait till we are driven to pray, if we would forestall the evil one.

And then the second suggestion is this. The Holy Spirit took possession of our Lord. Before the temptation came, the Spirit filled him with himself, to meet the temptation.

And yet I want to remind you of this,—the Lord Jesus was not filled with the Holy Spirit in a sense peculiar to himself. He insisted at every point in living the life of a man, dependent entirely upon the Holy Spirit. And the thing to mark is this, that just as the Son of Man as man was filled by the Holy Spirit before the temptation came, that he might meet and resist the temptation, even so you and I will be filled if he may have his way, filled beforehand that we may meet temptation as he did, prepared ahead.—Condensed from Quiet Talks about the Tempter, by Dr. S. D. Gordon.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our struggling would be losing,
Were not the right Man by our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.—Luther.

No one can ask honestly or hopefully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.—Ruskin.

"Temptation is not an opportunity to sin: it is an opportunity to refuse to sin."

"Every time that we yield to temptation
It is easier for us to do wrong;
Every time we resist temptation,
It is easier for us to be strong."

The heart that is fullest of good works hath in it least room for Satan's temptations.—Bunyan.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where in the Gospel of Luke are the first two verses of our text quoted? 2. Who quoted them? 3. Why? 4. What effect did his claim have upon the people of Nazareth? 5. Why? 6. In what book of the Bible is our text found? 7. Of what are the first four verses a promise? 8. Of what are the last verses a prophecy? 9. What does "good tidings" mean? 10. What is the meaning of giving "a garland for ashes"? 11. "The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness"? 12. What has prohibition accomplished in helping to bring about this "year of Jehovah's favor"?

WORLD-WIDE PROHIBITION—WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

Golden Text

Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14.34

LESSON Isaiah 61.1-9 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 93

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 7.15-20; Romans 14.13

ISAIAH 61.1 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening *of the prison* to them that are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified.

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 6 But ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. 7 Instead of your shame *ye shall have* double; and instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them. 8 For I, Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity; and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. 9 And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A BEAUTIFUL PROMISE: THE COMING YEAR OF GRACE, verses 1-4. Who is the speaker, the prophet or the Servant of Jehovah? Professor Charles Foster Kent says that these verses "describe with marvelous accuracy the aims which the great poet-prophet of the restoration set before himself. This might well stand as a preface to his entire prophecy. To bring the message of comfort to the scattered and broken-hearted exiles of his race, to announce to them that the hour of Jehovah's deliverance was at hand, to turn their mourning into rejoicing, and to inspire them to come back and rebuild the desolate ruins were precisely the ends which he was striving to attain by each of his prophecies." When Jesus read these words in his first public address in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lk. 4.16-21) he said, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," and we can never read these words without recalling how clearly he did fulfil them.

Jehovah's Spirit abides with me, because he has *anointed me,* ordained me to my office of preaching *good tidings unto the meek,* or *the poor,* as the marginal rendering gives it. "The 'afflicted,' or 'the poor' is the classical name for God's people in Exile. It was for *news* from God that Israel waited in Exile; for *good tidings.* Freedom and restoration had been promised them: they waited for the proclamation that it was coming, for the good news that it had arrived. But 'good tidings' and the 'proclamation' meant so much more than the mere political deliverance of Israel—meant the fact of their pardon, the tale of their God's love, of his provision for them, and of his wonderful passion and triumph of salvation on their behalf—that it is no wonder that these two words came to be ever afterwards the classical term for all speech and prophecy from God to man. We actually owe the Greek words of the New Testament for 'gospel'

and 'preaching' to this time of Israel's history. The Greek term, from which we have 'evangel,' 'evangelist,' and 'evangelize,' originally meant good news, but was first employed in a religious sense in the Greek translation of our prophecy. And our word 'preach' is the heir, though not the lineal descendant, of the word which is translated to *proclaim* and also to *call* or *cry*" (Dr. George Adam Smith).

My mission is to comfort the *broken-hearted,* continues the speaker, to *proclaim* freedom to those in bondage and to herald the year of grace to those who love Jehovah, which will also be a *day of vengeance* upon his foes. When Jesus came to this last sentence in his reading, he stopped in the middle and closed the book. He did not read the clause, "And the day of vengeance of our God," for his purpose at that time was to set forth the mercifulness of the coming of the Messiah. "And 'a year of the Lord' it was indeed! The kindly note he struck in that opening address, the proclamation of the coming reign of good will among men, made that a worthy starting place. It was an earnest of the coming of other years of splendid history worthy to be called 'Years of our Lord.' How swiftly he wrought! Three years—for great achievement such a brief space is like yesterday when it is past! How many years Alexander and Cæsar and Cromwell and Napoleon wrought in the accomplishment of their work, yet their impress fades and dims, while the impress of the Christ brightens with the centuries. There stands the Christ, the greatest fact in history, writing his name in a bold hand across all the finer pages of it, saturating with his spirit all the finer movements in it, making the years of genuine progress veritable years of our Lord!" (Charles Reynolds Brown). *To comfort all that mourn,* exchanging *garlands,* signs of joy, for *ashes,* signs of mourning—festive garments instead of mourning attire, songs for sighs: that they may be called Terebinths of Triumph, Oaks of Victory, *trees of righteousness,* planted by Jehovah for his glory.

II. BEAUTIFUL PICTURES: THE RESTORED ZION, verses 4-9 The waste places shall be built up, the ruined cities shall be repaired. *Strangers* and *foreigners,* men of other nations, shall perform the menial work of caring for the flocks and vines, and doing the plowing. Thou, O Israel, shalt be called *the priests of Jehovah, ministers of our God* (recall Ex. 19.6). You shall enjoy *the wealth of the nations,* deck yourselves in their splendor. As compensation for your former *shame* and ignominy you *shall have* a *double* portion and everlasting joy. For Jehovah loves justice and hates iniquitous robbery, and therefore he will *recompense* his wronged people and will make *with them an everlasting covenant.* Their descendants shall be renowned among the nations: all people shall acknowledge their pre-eminent blessedness as the people of God.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What prophet uttered the words which we studied for our first temperance lesson this year? Whom was he warning? What was our temperance lesson for the last Quarter? What facts did we learn about the progress made in enforcing prohibition in America (U. S. and Canada)? What farther steps seem necessary to be taken?

The Prophecies of Isaiah. See page 174.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

The time to stop fighting in a good cause does not come until the opponents of that cause have quit. The liquor traffic has received its death blow, but we cannot yet say that "They are dead who sought the child's life." One of the speakers at a meeting of the New Jersey Liquor Dealers' Protective League, in advocating unanimous support of anti-prohibition candidates for state and government office, said: "Through such a plan followed consistently by liquor men from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lies our only hope for the future of our *temporarily eclipsed industry.* When we are able to control enough votes in Congress we may be able to bring about the repeal of the Volstead Act."

In 1918 a lesson writer said that "after the nation voted itself dry a temperance lesson would be about as interesting as a lesson on the slave trade, Indian question, witchcraft, lottery, and all the other has-beens." Prohibition has been achieved in America. It is a part of the law of our land. But it is by no means

yet a "has-been." Unless public sentiment is back of the enforcement of the law, unless educational propaganda against alcohol is continued in our churches and schools, the youth of our land may undo what this generation has wrought. Moreover, our interest in the question does not end with its effect upon our own nation alone, there are other lands to conquer. It is wise to continue our annual World's Temperance Sunday, and our quarterly Temperance Lessons.

For the choice of our text in this connection, see below:

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE PROGRESS OF WORLD PROHIBITION

Beginning the Lesson. The opening passage of our text from Isaiah has been described by Henry Drummond as the Program of Christianity. These were the words which our Lord used at Jerusalem to inaugurate his ministry. He thereby told his fellow townsmen that they adequately expressed his purpose in the world. And what a program it was! It is a grievous temptation, here in our Quarter's study of the life of Christ as told by Luke, to spend the time in discussing this program of our Lord and its bearing upon all life today. But this is our World's Temperance Sunday, and this text is given us rather as a point of departure for our annual world's temperance lesson.

There are several passages in the Old Testament which denounce intemperance in no uncertain terms. We have often had the one from Proverbs 23 in which the sage tells us that wine at the last biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. We have studied in years past the scathing words in which the prophets addressed a drink-sodden people. When we think of Isaiah as a temperance reformer we think of Isaiah 28.

Today our text from Isaiah 61 is in a wholly different tenor, but it befits our theme of the Progress of Prohibition throughout the World. Certainly when the drink evil is removed from the world much will have been done toward the binding up of the broken-hearted and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. It will mean the year of God's favor of which Tennyson sings when he speaks of

> Every tiger madness muzzled,
> Every serpent passion killed,
> Every grim ravine a garden,
> Every blazing desert tilled.

Unpopular Reform Measures. Said a reformer recently: "I seem to be a reformer by nature. When I see one reform accomplished I at once devote myself to another. I began with Slavery. For that I was stoned. I went on to Woman Suffrage. For that I was rotten-egged. Then I took up Prohibition. For that I was only reviled by the newspapers, and called a hypocrite. My progress toward a back seat is always the gauge of the progress forward of my cause. When the cause is unpopular I am asked to speak; when it begins to gain, I am asked to sit on the platform; when it is about to succeed, I am forgotten. Nowadays, when I see the former opponents of my cause carrying a banner for it, I look up a new reform, for my work in the last is done."

Measures today deemed not only impossible but outrageous, will one day be adopted; and the next day they will be taken for granted, and children will ask, "Wasn't it always so?" When they are proposed, what questions should a Christian ask about them? When you have decided that if they could be carried out humanity would be better or happier, will you let their unpopularity prevent you from working for them? That would be to ignore the lessons of history. Are you going to say: "That is purely visionary. It can't be carried out while men are what they are. You can't change human nature, you know." That would be to deny God. He is constantly changing human nature, and would do so more rapidly if Christians would accept the privilege of helping him.

The End of the Desolations of Many Generations. Convivial drinking goes back to the dawn of history. It is one of the immemorial traditions of the race. It has been enshrined in story, exalted in art, made fascinating in song, and countless customs of private friendship and public ceremonial have been entwined with it. Moreover, in our modern times billions of dollars have been invested in the traffic. It seemed absurd to propose its abolition. But one unescapable fact was more than a match for this enormous weight of power:

the liquor traffic was not useful. All men who knew that fact saw that from the cavernous maw of the liquor traffic came an endless stream of wrecked homes and blasted lives, of unspeakable personal filth and public degradation, of economic inefficiency and unproductiveness. Whatever else the liquor traffic involved, it always involved this. Tradition, wealth, the ingrained habit of millions of men—not all these together could withstand that fact. The liquor traffic must go, for usefulness is the only assured basis of survival, for any institution in society.—Dr. Henry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Service.

The Day after Victory. The day after victory is the trying time. The reaction from its exaltation is liable to be a feeling of lassitude and a wonder in the hearts of many as to whether such voluntary assumption of duty is required of us poor mortals; why not let the wicked world wag its own foolish way—we can take care of number one. Victory won is not victory secured, and eternal vigilance is less exciting and by so much less interesting than the big fight. Then there are many of emotional temperament who assume that a victory won is a victory secured and turn to other things; if they cannot go shouting to battle they will not go. The Anti-Saloon League is not looking for new fields to conquer but it is looking for new sources of revenue, and its needs were never greater. There is all too much inclination in the churches to retire as armies of occupation and leave that dull task to police powers alone.

And right there rests the future. Unless prohibition prohibits it falls into disregard among even its partisans of yesterday. If it is made effective the rest of the world will come to our Jerusalem to learn the way of the law and all nations will flow into the Zion of sobriety. If the voluntary moral forces of the nation leave enforcement wholly to police powers, they will have put their reliance in a body of men without temperance conviction as a group and among whom a large percentage would vote against it on a referendum. The annual banquet of the New York City police last winter glittered with sparkling goblets and foamed with lager; it was a spectacle to behold Bacchus presiding at the great festive board of the servants of the law which had forbidden the sale and transportation of liquor. In such public way they wig-wagged the signal "off duty" to every prohibition law-breaker on their beats. No wonder the metropolis lends doubt to those sceptical of prohibition. Either every one appointed to enforce the law must be a known partisan of it, or the moral forces of society must follow them to duty with the unsleeping eye of an eternal vigilance.

The major question today is whether the ship of state shall sail straight to the dry land of absolute prohibition or skirt the wet shores in a devious attempt merely to keep in sight of safe, dry land. The liquor forces have no hope of securing a repeal of the eighteenth amendment; sorties in that direction are mere feints to draw the dry forces away from the more vulnerable defense against light wines and beer.

There is a real issue involved in the light wine and beer contention. No moral reform can be made to work unless there is a dominant moral opinion to back it up. There are many on the broad neutral grounds between absolute prohibition and the older notion of temperance as self-control in indulgence, and there are many good men still unconverted to the newer ideals of social control for the common good. No one defends the American saloon of yesterday; many still believe it is a question of personal liberty.

The theoretical issue is between the old idea, still regnant in French democracy, that society's right to interfere with the individual's freedom of desire and action must be kept to the minimum of public safety, and the newer idea of American democracy that the individual's desire and action shall not interfere with the welfare of his fellow citizens. The practical issue is between bone dry prohibition laws with such illicit sale and consumption as cannot be prevented, or the open sale of light intoxicants as a measure of prohibition. Temperance sentiment in the continental countries favors the latter. America is the battle ground of the former. To admit light wines and beer is to open the flood gates of abuse; admit them and stronger liquors will be sold *ad libitum*. Besides, both are socially and morally injurious and around their sale will gather the worst influences in politics. The prohibition of strong drink will never be absolute nor will that of gambling and the sex evil, to say nothing of the adulteration of goods and many other things prohibited this side of stealing, burning and killing, but it is already effective to reduce marvelously crime, poverty

and the other greater social evils. Its great benefits will come when a generation has grown up under conditions that drive its purveying out of sight and from the path of daily temptation. We must drive it farther and farther from the pathway of youth by the most drastic enforcement possible.—Alva W. Taylor, in The Christian Century.

Forcing Opium on China. The International Reform Bureau has been gathering information on the revival of the opium traffic in China and finds that the responsibility rests primarily upon Japan and Great Britain, but that our own country is not without guilt. It is a moral tragedy that after a great people have arisen to such moral heights as to banish the opium vice, stronger nations should conspire to pull them down again. Above all it is a moral tragedy that the two foremost Christian nations in the world should be parties to the wrong. While we do not directly market the poisons in China, we do sell to the Japanese, who are the peddlars of the drug, taking advantage of their territorial rights and of their new aggressions in Shantung and Manchuria. In five months enough opium and morphine were shipped out of Seattle to give every one of the 60,000,000 users in China a smoke a day for a week. For generations the Indian opium trade was fixed upon China. It was on account of it that the Opium War was fought more than three-quarters of a century ago, England joining forces with the government to put down the rebellion. Hongkong has been the seat of traffic for generations, and the Indian government has been the recipient of large taxes from the traffic carried on from there through Hongkong and the treaty ports of China. The opium merchant un-does much that the missionary accomplishes. There is now before congress a bill known as the Jones-Miller bill that will, if passed into law, make it unlawful to export morphine, heroin or other derivatives of opium.—The Christian Century, May, 1921.

The Progress of Prohibition in Great Britain. "I hate prohibition. I think it is an invasion of personal rights." Thus spoke a prominent Britisher to an American as they were having lunch together in a beautiful English home. "But," he continued with great emphasis, "I believe you are going to drive us to it economically in five years." That was two years ago. Are his words proving prophetic? Is there any evidence that a nation where liquor drinking is allowed cannot successfully compete in the professions and trades and commerce with a non-drinking nation? What gains has the public sentiment against alcohol made in Great Britain since we adopted prohibition?

The Progress of Prohibition in Africa. "The whole country, with the exception of the Christians, is drunk," is the report that comes from Portuguese East Africa. "I have had dozens of natives under personal observation and have seen them ruin themselves in a few years. Nothing so demoralizes the negro as free access to intoxicants. Women are as much addicted as men. It is not an uncommon sight to see a woman lying senseless by the roadside, with a baby crawling over her. The greatest hindrance to the spread of Christianity is the prevalence of drinking."

This is the report at this writing, a year and a half before this lesson is studied in the schools of our land. Is it still a true report?

Getting Used to World Prohibition. Only those of most ardent faith were ready for the challenging ideal of world prohibition. This was a dream, it was supposed, that could not be realized in the life time of any now living, if indeed within the present century. Astonishing events in other countries, however, are leading many to modify this view. It takes some time to get over the shock of the announcement that three of the provinces of Mexico are now under prohibition. Provincial legislation has practically outlawed the liquor traffic in Canada, including Newfoundland. Uruguay now has a law which provides for temperance instruction in the public schools. Saloons are forbidden in that country in certain places where they would be most profitable. The labor unions of South America have gone over to prohibition in many instances and have refused to unload ships which contained liquor. The King of Denmark has signed prohibition laws for Iceland and Greenland and offers to do the same for Denmark. A man starting at the North Pole would have to travel a long time on the North American continent before he could find a drink. The spread of prohibition sentiment in the world is only another example of the authority wielded by the richest and most powerful nation in the world. America has a responsibility to God in the way of world leadership which is

only dimly perceived at this time but which will grow clearer with the passing time.—The Christian Century, August, 1920.

For Discussion. 1. Bishop Fred B. Fisher calls Luke 4.18, which is Isa. 61.1-3, the flaming torch of social Christianity. "This torch has been lighting up the dark places, setting fire to outworn social structures, and kindling holy aspirations in the breasts of unemancipated millions. The social challenge of Christianity is to build a human society that will make it possible for all the earth's naked to be clothed, its hungry to be fed, its bruised to be healed, its slaves to be freed."

2. A garland for ashes. Think of that beautiful passage in Maeterlink's Blue Bird, in which we see little Tyltyl and Mytil creep into the churchyard at the witching hour of midnight to see the dead come forth from their graves. As the clock strikes the hour the graves open, and from them come forth—not the dead—but great masses of beautiful flowers which transform the cemetery into a garden of glorious life and beauty. Beauty for ashes, indeed! A garland for ashes in truth! And into the minds of the children comes the stupendous revelation: "There are no dead." The grave has no victory.—A. D. Belden.

3. Drug-addiction and prohibition.

4. Alcohol's place in the arts and sciences.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did the Jews believe was the cause of sickness? 2. On what other occasions did Jesus show that he read men's thoughts? (Lk. 6.8; 9.47; Mk. 12.15; Jn. 2.24; 4.29). 3. What is blasphemy? 4. What similar miracle does John record which gave rise to the charge of blasphemy? (Jn. 5.18). 5. Explain the reasoning in verses 23 and 24. 6. What sort of miracle-worker had the Jews expected the Christ would be? 7. Why did Jesus perform miracles, and what was their nature?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE NEXT STEP IN PROHIBITION

Beginning the Lesson. See the suggestion for beginning the lesson given for Young People, and continue with the Text Explained.

"Pussyfoot" Johnson's Idea. "Pussyfoot" Johnson reminds me of Moody—a plain, solid man whom God has honored to do a conspicuous piece of work. God has so honored him because he has an undying, unwavering, rock-biased conviction about this wet and dry business. He believes the world will go dry. He says England will go dry in ten years, if not before. His vision is broader than the United States; he thinks in world terms. He lost an eye in England. A crowd of medical students broke up one of his meetings and put out his eye. He was a good sport. He did not whine—he smiled. Now they say, "Pussyfoot's eye will make England dry." I notice that the brewers and distillers of Britain have just raised a fund of four millions of dollars and have engaged a lot of orators to go up and down the Island trying to undo what Johnson did. He must have done something!

The old gang used to sing in the taverns, "We want what we want when we want it," and then they proceded to want and to get copious quantities of beer and whiskey. But a new group sprang up who knew what they wanted and when they wanted it. Business men, tired and disgusted with the inefficiency of drinking men, wanted a dry city. Wives suffering hardships and deprivations because the saloon-keeper got the husband's money first, knew what they wanted. Reformers, knowing that all evils such as poverty, licentiousness, thieving and the rest ran back to the saloon, knew what they wanted. Preachers and millions of church members, seeing how their work was handicapped by the inroads of drink, knew what they wanted. Thus the Eighteenth Amendment was written into the Constitution!

Pubic opinion must still be cultivated and only men and women like "Pussyfoot" Johnson, who have deep and solid conviction, can be of any value. It is of supreme importance that our Sunday-schools make much of temperance Sundays.—John R. Ewers, in the Christian Century.

The Next Step in the Prohibition Campaign in our City. When our Lesson Committee assigned our topic for today, the Next Step in the Prohibition Campaign, they had in mind that the next step after freeing our own land from the curse of intoxicating liquor is to free the world from this evil. But we

may profitably consider for a moment another evil from which our young folks need to be freed.

Do you know why physicians wish to banish the cigarette? Here are reasons which C. C. Rarick gives in The Adult Bible Class Monthly:—

Nicotine, the active principle in tobacco, is one of the most deadly poisons known—far more deadly than opium and exceeded only by prussic acid. Various schemes to eliminate nicotine from tobacco have been tried but without success. Even the so-called mild cigars and cigarettes have been found to contain as much (or more) nicotine as the stronger varieties. And where a nicotineless smoke has been produced it did not appeal to the smoker. Whoever smokes must get a toxic effect from it or he does not care for it.

Another poison in cigarettes is furfural—fifty times as poisonous as alcohol. Another is pyridine, used in denaturing alcohol. Another is carbon monoxide. Another is acrolein. All these deadly poisons are inhaled with the cigarette smoke.

It is found that one of the most effective ways to introduce poisons into the human body is by inhalation. Our surgeons, as everybody knows, employ this method to place their patients in a state of unconsciousness before performing a major surgical operation. It requires a much longer time for the cigarette smoke to cause death or serious permanent injury. But therein lies its deadly nature. Its insidious, treacherous mildness, its soothing effect, the vast extent of its use, the slow degrees by which it undermines and destroys the bodies and minds of its victims, render its fumes in time the most deadly of foes.

Among the diseases that have been traced directly to the use of tobacco are: dimness of vision, color blindness, tuberculosis, hardening of the arteries, tobacco heart, kidney trouble, apoplexy, angina pectoris; and it is believed that the great prevalence of pneumonia in the cantonments during the war was due largely to the cigarette habit.

Dr. D. H. Kress says: "The majority of mankind now die not of germ diseases but of organic diseases better known as diseases of degeneracy. The vital organs give way early in life. The liver, the kidneys, and the heart, from the continuous irritation produced by various irritants introduced into the blood, wear out prematurely. Men die at an age when they ought to be at their best. Heart disease, apoplexy, diabetes, and Bright's disease are responsible for most of the deaths. The mortality from these diseases is rapidly increasing. It is our men as a rule, not our women, who at the age of forty or fifty die suddenly of heart disease or apoplexy. The prevalent use of tobacco is one of the chief causes of this rapid increase in the mortality rate from these diseases."

Dr. Edwin F. Bowers, of New York City, says: "Cigarette smoking is infinitely more pernicious than drinking; for the drink habit in boys is readily curable, while the cigarette habit is but seldom eradicated."

The time has come when the Government will have to take some radical action to protect our youth from the cigarette poisons.

The Testimony of Nicola Tesla, the Great Inventor. Long before I was twenty, I was smoking excessively. My health was threatened, and my family often tried to get me to promise to stop, but I would not.

One day I was standing in front of our house, when they told me the doctor had just said that my youngest sister, who had been very ill for some time, was dying. I went up to her room, carrying my lighted cigar, and before kneeling at her bedside I placed the cigar on a little table beside the bed.

"Niko," she said, so faintly that I could hardly hear her, "you are killing yourself with smoking. Promise me you will give it up."

"Yes," I said; "if you will get well, I promise to give up smoking."

"All right, Niko," she said feebly. "I will try."

She did get well, and I have never smoked since. It was very hard to give it up, but I was determined to keep my promise. Not only did I stop, but I finally destroyed every inclination for what had been such a great satisfaction. In this way I have freed myself of other habits and passions, and so have preserved my health and my zest for life. The satisfaction derived from demonstrating my own strength of will has always meant more to me in the end than the pleasurable habits I gave up. I believe that a man can and should stop any habit he recognizes to be "foolish."

What Next after Prohibition? It is said by opponents of the prohibition of intoxicating liquors that when these liquors are no longer obtainable there

will be a greatly added consumption of habit-forming drugs. Undoubtedly there is truth in this assertion, consequently it is well for the forces which have so successfully waged war upon strong drink now to give particular attention to drugs which enslave even more terribly than does alcohol.

Dr. Royal S. Copeland, health commissioner of New York City, declares that there are fully 200,000 drug addicts in the city of New York. With this estimate for one city, what must the number be for the entire country? What are the drugs of which these thousands are victims? Morphine, cocaine, heroin and chloral are probably the drugs which Dr. Copeland referred to in his enumeration.

Few persons seem to realize the grave danger of frequent resort to sleeping powders and headache powders. Those who begin to depend upon veronal, trional, sulphonal, somnose and other such drugs for sleep are on the path that leads to an extreme neurotic condition. Physicians who prescribe such drugs, without any warning of their danger, are wickedly negligent of the welfare of their patients. Two hours of natural sleep are more restful to the brain than a whole night of stupor from the hypnotic drugs. The prevalence of neuritis and of anæmia is said by students of these drugs to be due largely to the free use of the coal-tar derivatives. These drugs are habit-forming; resort to them soon places the user in slavery. It becomes impossible to sleep without the drug and increased amounts become necessary to secure the desired slumber.

Acetanilid, phenacetin and caffeine are the drugs commonly found in headache powders. There is no drug that quickly relieves pain without at the same time doing injury to the body, hence there are no "harmless" headache powders, no matter what the manufacturers say of them.

Some of the prevalence of drug habits may be traced to the large sale of drug soft drinks, especially in the South. Extract of coca leaves and caffeine enter into the composition of many soft drinks made in the South. Since the United States government exposé of the presence of cocaine in soft drinks the extract of coco used has been made from coca leaves after the cocaine has been extracted. However, analysis state that it is not always possible to be certain that no cocaine remains in the exhausted leaves. Its presence in minute quantity is difficult to determine. Hence while manufacturers of soft drinks may not now knowingly place cocaine in these drinks, there is danger of its presence while extract of coca leaves enters into the preparation of these beverages. It is certain that coca and kola drinks create addiction, as reports come of persons consuming as high as twenty glasses a day, and much ill behavior results. If the manufacture and sale of drug soft drinks is not curbed they will become a greatly increased menace to health and to good citizenship. People should arouse themselves and demand of their law-makers that caffeine, a powerful drug causing nervousness and enfeebled digestion, and extract of coca, the refuse of a cocaine factory, shall no longer be permitted in soft drinks sold to children as "harmless."

Drug habits are more easily concealed than the alcohol habit. They do not affect the brain in the same way, unless taken to excess, and they do not reveal their presence on the breath. Hence the drug habitué may for a long time conceal his addiction and some accident reveal it. The drug-taking railroad engineer or chauffeur is likely to be as dangerous as the drinker of liquor. The menace of drugs to public health and to society should now receive increased attention as the alcohol problem nears solution.

So far all laws governing the sale of habit-forming drugs have failed to check the spread of the evil. What should be done? The manufacture of all unnecessary habit-forming drugs should be stopped.—Condensed from an article in The Christian Advocate, by Mrs. Martha M. Allen.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. No form of deterioration is today more surely handicapping the boys than the cigarette habit.—Frances Willard.

Bodily enjoyment depends upon health, and health upon temperance.—Thales.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the account of the healing of the paralytic in Mt. 9.1-13 and Mk. 2.1-12. 2. What was the "couch"? 3. Describe an oriental house. 4. What traits of character did the four men show? 5. Would you take as much trouble for a friend? 6. What other cures are recorded by Luke just before this one? 7. Why was the Savior called Jesus, according to Mt. 1.21? 8. What city was the headquarters of Jesus at this time, and where was it?

LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 5

JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Golden Text

Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases. Matthew 8.17

LESSON Luke 4.31 to 5.39 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 63.7-14

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 9.35-38; Mark 1.21-45

LUKE 5.17 And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 And behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied: and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him. 19 And not finding by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus. 20 And seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? 22 But Jesus perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? 24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house. 25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God. 26 And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER, verse 17. *On one of those days,* following his brief holiday (see Historical Background), Jesus *was teaching* and there were *Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem.* They may have come from Jerusalem for the express purpose of finding wherewith to accuse Jesus, for their hostility had been aroused by his deeds during his early Judean ministry, which Luke does not record.

II. JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN FOR DISEASED BODIES AND SOULS, verses 18-26. Four men came bearing a palsied man whom they believed Jesus could cure. Finding the way to Jesus blocked by the great crowd, they mounted the outer stairway to the roof, and then tore up the roof sufficiently to allow them to let their burden down before him. See Light from Oriental Life. "Ingenuity coöperated with their confidence. And so is it always when we are seeking to bring our broken humanity to the Great Physician. We must labor in the crusade. We must be inventive and ingenious, using our wits as well as our prayers" (Jowett).

Seeing their faith, Jesus said, *Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Had they not believed that Jesus could and would cure the paralytic they would not have taken all this trouble to get him into Jesus's presence. *Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? the scribes and Pharisees reasoned in their hearts,* Mark 2.6. To *blaspheme* means primarily to *speak evil against God;* they accused Jesus of treating God impiously by claiming a prerogative that belonged only to God. If Jesus were not himself divine he was, indeed, blasphemous, since by claiming the right to exercise the divine prerogative of forgiving sin he claimed to be God. Jesus read the hearts of these men just as he had read the hearts of the four friends of the sick man, and he asked: *Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee;* or, *Arise and walk?* Both were equally easy *to say,* but the result of the latter saying was easier for Jesus to prove. That he had the power

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to forgive **sins** he could not prove on the spot, but that he had the power to cure disease he could at once demonstrate. Then, as Zigabenus says, "He made the visible power a testimony of the invisible," and said to the palsied man, *I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thy house.* The couch was a mat: see below. "He heals the paralyzed body that we may know what he can do with a paralyzed soul. He liberates the man who is bound by palsy that we may know what he can do for a man who is bound by guilt. We are to reason from the less to the greater, from the material type to the spiritual reality" (Jowett). As the man obeyed, *glorifying God* as he went, all were amazed and *filled with fear. We have seen strange things today,* they said.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied, verse 18. The bed was only a mattress, padded quilt, or blanket, or perhaps merely an outer garment. Probably in bringing the man the "bed" was placed upon a board or stretcher. (Wealthy homes had mattresses filled with cotton which were kept in an alcove built especially to hold them and concealed by a curtain. These were thrown down at night on the floor.)

Carrying a Bed in the East

They went up to the housetop, by the outer stairway, *and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus,* verse 19. The roof was low, and the four men by stooping down could let down the bed without the aid of ropes (as are represented in most pictures of the scene). "The usual flat roof of a village house consists of a thick covering of rolled earth laid upon branches which are supported by beams and smaller cross-beams. It could not have been such a roof that was uncovered, as the downpour of dust and débris would have instantly cleared the rooms of the assembled crowd. On account of the numbers present and seeking entrance, Jesus would be standing in the largest room, which was the open court with rooms on each side. From the fact mentioned in Mark 2.45—that he was able at the time to live outside the villages—it was evidently the summer season, and at that time the people often cover such an open court, or part of it, with branches and matting to be a screen from the sun. It would be a simple matter for the bearers to remove enough of this to be able to let down their patient."—Dr. G. M. Mackie.

Man, thy sins are forgiven thee, verse 20. The Jews associated sickness with sin, holding that the former was caused by the latter. You recall that when Jesus and his disciples met a man who had been blind from his birth, his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" The Jews believed that when a man recovered from an illness it indicated the Divine displeasure had been removed. "There is no sick man healed of his sickness," said the rabbis, "until all his sins have been forgiven him."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did each of the three temptations mean to Jesus in relation to his work? In facing his task what had he seen that he must not do? What had he seen that he must do?

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry. Jesus was not the Messiah whom the people had expected—a wonder-worker who as their political ruler would free them from their enemies. All such thoughts Jesus put away in his victory in the wilderness. Instead, he was the Messiah whom the Father expected—a Worker of miracles who as their spiritual Ruler should free men from bodily and spiritual ills.

With his disciples whom he had met in Judea and had asked to follow him as fishers of men in Galilee, he began his Galilean ministry. His first reported sermon was given in Nazareth, his home town. When he claimed to fulfil Scripture, the people were incredulous. "Is not this Joseph's son?" they asked. "No prophet is acceptable in his own country," answered Jesus. Finally the people became so enraged that they cast him out of the city and would have

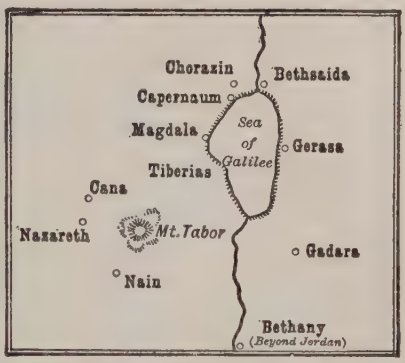
thrown him down over the steep hill on which the city is built had he not made his escape.

Jesus went to Capernaum and this city became henceforth his headquarters. Luke records next the curing of a demoniac and of Peter's wife's mother, and the wonderful draught of fishes on the Sea of Galilee. The healing of a leper caused a great sensation, and so great a throng of people pressed upon Jesus that he withdrew into quiet country places for rest and prayer.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of this event was Capernaum, as Mark (2.1) tells us. Two sites on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, Tell Hum and Khan Minyeh, are claimed as the location of Capernaum.

Assign paragraphs 155-157 of In the Master's Country.



Cities around the Sea of Galilee

TEACHER TRAINING THOUGHTS

Impress upon your pupils these thoughts of Bishop William Fraser McDowell, taken from his book In the School of Christ.

I think His miracles will seem to us much more significant as exhibitions of truth and purpose and power than simply as exhibitions of power. They look extraordinary to us because we cannot do them. Apparently our Master did not regard them as extraordinary at all. Nor were they for him. The law of cause and effect does not seem to be set aside when he does an unusual thing. Indeed, he did not think wonders the most important things he did. Some mathematical geniuses can do marvellous sums to the amazement of everybody. One of them once told me that he did not set great store by his ability to do those prodigious sums. He regarded the right use of mathematics in life's ordinary transactions as far more valuable.

Jesus never would conduct an exhibition miracle. "He imposed upon himself strict restraint in the use of his supernatural powers." As near an approach as any was when he said, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins he said to the sick of the palsy, 'Arise, take up your bed and go home'"; but that was chiefly an exhibition of true forgiving power; an exhibition of God's grace rather than of anything else. It was related chiefly not to palsy but to forgiveness.

Everything he did was done with reference to his whole program. It sprang from his heart and bore upon his mission. He was not seeking to accredit himself as one seals a document. He was seeking to reveal himself. He could do things and he did them. He wanted men to know that God cared for them. Doing things for them was one way of showing them that this was so. So he matched up his declarations with his deeds. And the miracles like the parables became revelations of the character and thought of God.

Some ears were too dull to hear what he had to say. His words fell upon fat hearts. So like an old time professor of chemistry or physics he would make his appeal through the eye. He must reach men. They must be made aware of God, and that God was with him. The miracles show it, which is vastly better than simply attesting it.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JESUS'S MINISTRY TO HUMAN NEED

Beginning the Lesson. Paul calls Luke "the beloved physician." Doctor Luke is the *first Christian* physician of whom we have any record in history. He knew all that the science of his day could do for diseased bodies, and he had learned from first-hand sources (Luke 1.1-3) what Jesus could do for both diseased bodies and diseased souls. In his Gospel Luke shows his professional interest by giving certain details in regard to afflicted ones whom

Jesus cured, which the other Evangelists omit. We can imagine with what special interest he recorded the healing of the palsied man whom four friends brought to Jesus.

Jesus's Estimate of Human Nature. In the commonest lives there are lovely and beautiful things, if we have the eyes to see them: the patience that watches by the sick-bed, the love that survives slight and cruelty, the fidelity that endures under temptation, the solitary virtue which, like the pearl, is begotten out of decay and shines resplendent in corruption. Jesus did not find human nature wholly evil; he discovered faith in the pagan, penitence in the thief and love in the harlot. He did not find human life a poor business; it was so great that he endured the loss of heaven that he might live it for a season. Was life for him built up only of the pettiness and meanness which the cynic is so keen to see? Ah no, for him life was

"Built of tears and sacred flames,
And virtue reaching to its aims,
Built of furtherance and pursuing,
Not of spent deeds but of doing."

From a Sermon by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

Wholeness of Life. The gospel of Jesus everywhere puts a very strong emphasis upon "wholeness of life," as the normal result of the attitude of *faith.* "Art thou desiring to be made whole?" can be taken as a fundamental question of Christ to men. Christ is always concerned to quiet strained nerves, to allay fear, to remove prejudice and suspicion, fret and worry, strain and anxiety. But he also goes farther. He regards health of body and buoyancy of spirit as the true normal condition of life, and he calls men to a way of living which produces these results. Pythagoras taught the novel idea, many centuries before, that the various elements of the body could, through the attitude and disposition of the mind, be put into such relation or balance with one another that the body in its right form would reveal a harmony, like that of the musical scale, or even like that of the harmony of the planetary spheres. It is from this theory that we get our word *tonic* as that which puts the body into *tone,* or harmony.

Christ naturally, spontaneously, assumes that men are to live in health and tone and efficient power of life. His gospel is in this fundamental sense *tonic.* It aims at nothing less than an integral wholeness of life, a harmony of outer and inner self, a freedom from all physical hindrances except those which are a necessary part of finite and limited existence and a complete possession of the potential powers of personality. That way of living seems to have been the normal course with him, and one of the most striking effects of his relationship and fellowship with men was this fundamental tonic effect upon them. He organized their potential powers. He liberated the forces of which they had been unconscious. He made them whole. He gave them health. He actually produced what Clement of Alexandria, two centuries later, called "harmonized men."—Rufus M. Jones, in The World Within.

The Church and the World's Miseries. The president of the New York Society for the Prevention of Unnecessary Noise has had constructed in her residence on Riverside Drive a sound-proof room. Below in the streets is the ceaseless jar of the world's life. Still below that is the shriek and rumble of the railroad traffic on the water level. But into that sound-proof room no wrangling note of turmoil ever penetrates. It is a sobering thought that the church may easily become such a sound-proof room, admitting into its confines of quietness and content no disturbing reminders of the world's aching heart and sin. "Peace, Perfect Peace," may be its only anthem, so that it forgets to turn over the page to the less sedative strains of "Rescue the Perishing." God never speaks so directly to his church as through the deep-throated voice of the world's misery, and every member who by his sympathies enables the church to continually hear the "still, sad music of humanity," lays upon its heart the restless urge which the fellowship of his sufferings brings.

Open my heart to music; let
Me thrill with spring's first lutes and drums;
But never let me dare forget
The bitter ballads of the slums.

Halford E. Luccock, in Fares, Please!

Preventive Work Needed Today. "After one has worked for a time in healing wounds which should never have been inflicted, tending illness which should never have developed, sending patients to hospitals who need not have gone if their homes were habitable, bringing charitable aid to persons who would not have needed charity if health had not been ruined by unwholesome conditions, alleviating suffering and sorrow that need not have been;—one loses heart and longs for preventive work, constructive work,—something that will make it less easy for so many illnesses and accidents to occur, that will help to bring better homes and work-shops, better conditions of life and labor."

In that little book which is packed so full of trenchant thought, The Meaning of Service, Dr. Fosdick writes:—All of us at times have the privilege of ministering directly to the comfort and recovery of the sick. But no Christian who uses his imagination can be content with those opportunities which chance throws in his way. The sick who most need care are often outside the range of individual ministry. Has your community a hospital properly equipped to minister to the whole community? Are there visiting nurses to be summoned in case of need? Is there a health department in your community which is cleaning up unsanitary districts, removing the cause of disease, and preventing its spread? Is there need of a convalescent home, a fresh-air program, a special physician's superintendence of school children? No wordy profession of Christian care about the sick amounts to much in a modern community, save as such questions are answered. What multitudes of Christians need a baptism of public-mindedness!

The Spread of the Spirit of Jesus. The member of the herd who falls out is not merely left to die; his life is stamped out by his own kind. A hen in your barnyard with a sore head is picked at by the other hens until she dies. And if the herd or flock is to prosper, this is a good law. The weak are destroyed. Only the fittest survives.

Among savage tribes and primitive peoples the same law is seen in the exposure of defective or sickly children and in the murder of the aged. The food supply is limited; the tribe must not be impeded when flight becomes necessary; the weak must go.

As the soul of man develops, there enters a new spirit, modifying and contradicting the jungle law. Jesus announced it, illustrated it, exemplified it, and exhorted us to obey it. The Good Shepherd seeks the lost and succors the ailing. This spirit has increasingly prevailed among his followers, both individually and collectively. No matter how far any society has diverged from his teachings in other respects, the giving of alms, the healing of disease, the helping of the unfortunate, have always since his day been regarded as acts of piety.

There have been three types in the manifestation of Jesus's spirit of pitifulness.

1. Individual kindness to individuals has developed so far that in modern civilized lands practically everyone either shows it or professes it. In the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, everybody who comes in contact with Mr. Hyde's unvarnished brutalities shudders. The candid cruelty of nature is abhorred by all except the most depraved. The corporation president who by a stroke of the pen has just consigned thousands of workmen to want will stop on his walk to pick up the fallen child of one of those workmen and send it comforted on its way. The open contempt and cruelty displayed by Monseigneur in Dicken's Tale of Two Cities is well nigh impossible now. School children are not struck, servants are not hated, lynchings arouse horror and disgust.

2. Organized charity—the coming together of numbers of like-minded people to serve the unfortunate, as in convents and monasteries, in hospitals and benevolent societies, began early in Christendom, and has continued and developed, so that every country church and every little village has its group who under one name or another succor the distressed. Some unfortunates are cared for by the community, as when a county establishes an insane asylum, or a city an orthopædic hospital. Some unfortunates are still cared for by volunteer societies, as when a religious denomination conducts an orphan asylum, or a Sunshine Society sets up a home for blind babies.

3. Of later years we have begun to see something more of what Jesus meant by emphasizing our brotherhood. Political units, as states and nations have begun to look upon themselves as social organizations. They have begun to think of each class of unfortunates as a symptom of some social malady, and

so to treat it. More or less scientific studies are made as to the causes of misfortune, and an attempt is made to remove them.

Especially since the Great War are we beginning to grasp the universality of our brotherhood. Those who suffer disease, want, sorrow anywhere are liable to cause suffering everywhere. Representatives of governments, of industries, of working men's organizations, of woman's clubs, of scientific societies, of welfare organizations, of schools and colleges and churches, meet and discuss how to deal with problems that are world-wide.

Thus the spirit of Jesus, who healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb, who cast out the spirit of wickedness, and who made the criterion which should decide our permanent union with him, our record for caring for the sick, the hungry, and those in prison—thus his spirit has spread throughout the world.

The Special Need Today. At this particular time perhaps the greatest value of Christ's example is in preserving the ideal of *personal* tenderness and service.

People are inclined to establish agencies and leave them to run themselves; to give to asylums but not to visit them. A prominent reformer sometimes sees his cause as a whole but is not sensitive to the sufferings of the individuals. "Don't bring these cases to my attention—I can't be diverted from pushing the whole cause," said a man when appealed to for special help.

A president who in advocating fine principles forgets, what Abraham Lincoln so well exemplified, that through the heart, not the head, followers are gained, will in the end wonder why his way was ineffective.

For all the world there is the moving spectacle of Jesus. His cause was the salvation of all the billions of souls inhabiting the whole world through all time. And he served with infinite compassion the individual palsied man of Palestine. Not only in the Parliament of Nations, the Congresses of the world, but in the heart of each unimportant citizen must his spirit flame. The sun is mirrored in each mist drop and in the ocean. One cannot be without the other.

For Discussion. 1. The Great Physician. See chapters 10 and 11 of The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

2. The Lord was with Jesus to heal, verse 17. Is he with men today in a similar way? What do you think of Mr. James Hickson and his healing ministry? He says that the Church should be a healing Church today. To quote his words: "I have seen many healed by the laying on of hands and by prayer, but it is Christ that heals, not I. Christ heals through us as he does other works through us. I do not use my own strength. There is strength that works through me, and for anything done, no credit is due me. I have seen others, who have the sympathy and faith which constitute what the Bible calls the gift of healing, undertake the work and reach similar results."

3. The work of healing of the Rockefeller Foundation.

4. The value and the cost of medical missions. See Dr. George E. Vincent's articles in The Christian Advocate for May 8, 1919, and March 4, 1920.

5. Is Robert Louis Stevenson justified in classifying the classes of men who "stand above the common herd" as follows: "The soldier, the sailor, and the shepherd not infrequently, the artist rarely; rarelier still, the clergyman; the physician almost as a rule"? He further says about the physician: "Generosity he has, such as is possible to those who practice an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried in a thousand embarrassments; and what are more important, Heraclean cheerfulness and courage. So it is that he brings air and cheer into the sick-room, and often enough, though not so often as he wishes, brings healing."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is said in Exodus 23.4 and Proverbs 25.21 about the treatment of enemies? 2. When did Jesus pray for those who despitefully used him? (Lk. 23.34). 3. What effect will doing a kindness to one whom you dislike have upon your attitude toward that one? 4. How are the counsels in verses 29 and 30 to be observed? 5. Explain the allusion in verse 38. 6. Can the Golden Rule be followed in business? 7. What verses in this lesson, after we have been urged to do good and forgive evil without hope of reward, then offer us reward? 8. From whom will the reward come and what will be its nature? 9. Why are we justified in striving to attain happiness through virtue?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JESUS'S POWER TO FORGIVE SIN

Beginning the Lesson. Some one has remarked that were we to judge the employment of Jesus by his recorded acts only, without reference to his sayings, we might say that Jesus followed the medical profession, for out of forty-five specifically narrated miracles wrought by him, thirty-six were miracles of restoration from sickness and death, to say nothing of the vast number of his other cures of which we have no specific record.

What is our Golden Text? Matthew here quotes the words of one of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets: who? (Turn to Matthew 8.17.) When Matthew applied to Jesus these words of Isaiah, he evidently had two great truths in mind.

First, that healing of disease was not an incidental work of Jesus, performed by a casual word and a wave of the hand, but that it was a work of love and pity, performed only by an outlay of strength, the strength which is used by one who sympathizes with another's distress, and thus "bears his diseases."

The other thought of Matthew was that infirmities and diseases are symbolical of sin, that in healing them Jesus showed his power to heal sin. "He must be blind indeed," says Edersheim, "who sees not in this Physician the Divine Healer; in this Christ the Light of the world, the Restorer of what sin has blighted."

The Story. Note the faith of that ambulance corps; they believed that Jesus could and would cure their friend, but they did not sit down afar and await his coming. They exerted their own efforts to the utmost to bring him to the Christ. "Trust in nothing but in Providence and your own efforts: never separate the two," counsels Dickens. These men did not separate the two.

Note the persistence of the four. They might well have been discouraged in finding a crowd so great and selfish, no room even about the door and no one willing to make room, and they might have told the sick man that they had done all they could to bring him to Jesus, but they could not do the impossible, and then they might have taken him back home with a virtuous feeling in their hearts that they had done all that could be expected of them. But they were of those men who Stanley says relish a task for its bigness and greet hard labor with a fierce joy. No crowd could turn them back. They did the seemingly impossible thing. All great things ever done were once deemed impossible.

Note their resourcefulness. If they could not get the sick man before Jesus by the ordinary way they could by an extraordinary way. They were determined to find a way or make it. That is the spirit that "arrives." Great men never wait for opportunities; they make them. Bunyan had no writing paper in jail, but he untwisted the stoppers of the milk bottles and wrote his "Pilgrim's Progress" upon them. Faith is full of inventions. "Cannot faith invent and reach by some new means the outcasts who lie perishing around us?" questions Spurgeon. Have we felt Christ's healing power in our own lives? If so, then through door, through window, or through roof, let us break through all impediments in order to bring poor souls to Jesus.

What will Jesus say? It is a great moment, as these two men silently confront each other, the living embodiments of helplessness and of Power. The eyes of all are riveted on Jesus—the people with curious expectancy, the four friends with beating hearts and desperate hopes, the scribes with a scowl upon their faces and hate in their hearts.

What will Jesus say? He was deeply cheered by the faith the friends had shown, and he would not let such faith go away disappointed. So, turning to the helpless man upon the couch, he said, "Courage, child!" He said more, but he began by saying that. And we can imagine how these two simple words, each in its own way, began to touch the springs of life and hope in the wasted body before him. The man, if a great sinner, may have been accustomed to words of reproach, or to that cold and shallow consolation which stings more keenly than reproach; and now he is told to take heart again. Here is One who speaks to him as if he believed in the possibility of his physical and spiritual recovery, One who appeals to his slumbering hope and heroism. And so tender an appeal, too! He calls him "Child." Many a year had passed since he had been anybody's "child"; and the tenderness of the Speaker no less than his first great, authoritative word, goes to the heart of the unhappy man. His inner world is transformed; a new life courses through his veins, and it will not be long till

he will be upon his feet, and going upon his way rejoicing. In the presence of this mysterious One, who speaks to him hopefully, who bids him be brave, who assures him of the forgiveness of sins, and who calls him Child, old things are passed away, and a new day has dawned.—John Edgar McFayden, in The City with Foundations.

Who Can Forgive Sins, but God Alone? It is true that none can forgive sins, save God. There is a sense in which a man can, and indeed ought to forgive sin committed against him by his brother man. But it is a very limited sense, being peculiarly relative and personal. In the deeper nature of sin no man can absolve his brother. The Psalmist in the olden days uttered a profound truth when, in the midst of his penitential outpouring, he said: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Therefore it is God alone who can forgive. Thus the word of Jesus to this man was the word of God, and his word of forgiveness is always the word of God. Only as that is so, can the heart of sinning men be satisfied. When my brother forgives me for the wrong I have done him, I am thankful to him, but his forgiveness has not lifted the burden from my conscience, nor cleansed the stain from my soul. When God forgives, he does both. Our rest in the sense of forgiveness is always created by the certainty that it is the gift of the grace of God.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

Jesus's Power to Forgive Sins. One day I was in the new church building and I spied a bird flitting to and fro up among the timbers of the staging, evidently much frightened. I was sorry for the poor thing, for there was the open door all the while. If I had only known bird language I would have told it. The next day I went into the church again. The first thing I did was to look for the bird; and there it was, poor, tired thing, flying back and forth again and beating itself against the walls and the windows.

Well, it escaped after awhile. How, do you think? It became tired and fell fluttering down, lower and lower—and there was the door. And then it just went out. Oh, it was so easy and so simple. The door had been there all the time. The door was put there on purpose for birds and folk to go in and out at. But it didn't know how easy the way was.

People sometimes are troubled on account of their sins—troubled to know the way out, and troubled about themselves. They think if they only work hard enough and try long enough they will get out of their troubles; and they flit and fly and flutter, and dash hither and thither, trying all sorts of things, but they don't get out. And Jesus is saying all the while: "I am the door." Sometimes the only way that some of us find the door is that we get so tired we cannot beat the air with our wings another moment, and with despair we fly lower, or fall; and then we find the door.

Do you know, that many people in other lands than this have felt that the only way to get their sins forgiven was to cut themselves with knives, or to hang suspended from a pole with an iron hook in their back, or to take long pilgrimages upon their knees? They must work so hard, and so long, and do so many things before their sins could be forgiven. They are like that poor, tired bird beating itself against the walls, and right before them is the open door, Jesus Christ. That is the simple way for us all, just to give ourselves to Christ. He will take care of our sins, and take care of our despair, and take care of us. Jesus said, "I am the door."—Frank T. Bayley, in Little Ten-minutes.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

Look inward through the depths of thine own soul;
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?—Lowell.

The great world's heart is aching, aching fiercely in the night,
And God alone can heal it, and God alone give light;
And the men to bear that message, and to speak the living word,
Are you and I, my brothers, and the millions that have heard.
—Frederick George Scott.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VI. Jesus the Great Physician.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. These words form part of what discourse given in Matthew? Where are they recorded? 2. Where is the Golden Rule found in Luke? In Matthew? 3. What did Jesus mean by counselling his hearers to "offer the other cheek"? 4. Are verses 29 and 30 to be followed literally? 5. What have you done today that no one but a Christian would do?

JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER

Golden Text

**As ye would that men should do to you,
do ye also to them likewise. Luke 6.31**

LESSON Luke 6.1-49 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 5.1-18; John 3.2; 6.68; 7.46; Colossians 2.3

LUKE 6.27 But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, 28 bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. 29 To him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. 30 Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. 35 But love your enemies, and do *them* good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. 36 Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 37 And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released: 38 give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. LOVE OF ENEMIES ENJOINED, verses 27,28. *But I say unto you that hear:* here Jesus turns from the worldling upon whom he has been pronouncing woes, verses 24-26, to his followers, and counsels them to be ruled by love in their treatment of their enemies. Those that *hate you . . . curse you . . . despitefully use you* ("the three stages of enmity—feeling, speech, deed"), you must *do good* to, . . . *bless, . . .pray for.* "Deeds of kindness, words of blessing, and highest of all, and best help to fulfilling the other two, prayer, are to be our meek answer to evil" (Maclaren).

II. HOW WRONG TO ONESELF SHOULD BE ENDURED, verses 29,30. The precepts in these verses illustrate in a striking way another form of love—non-retaliation. A non-Christian stands stiffly on his rights: a Christian yields his rights and suffers unmerited treatment, endures a blow and offers the other cheek, prevents a lawsuit by yielding more than his opponent claims, and submits to the demands of a borrower. That this counsel is to be observed in the spirit and not in the letter Jesus's own conduct recorded in Jn. 18.22,23 shows. "It is with the direction in which every one's face is turned that the Teacher is concerned, rather than with the several steps of the journey; it is not to slaves of the letter he is addressing himself, but to lovers of the spirit. In short, it is the love of man he is teaching, not an array of new commandments intended to rival the traditions of the scribes" (Stalker). "There may be resistance to wrong and refusal of a request, if love prompts to these. It is better for the other man that a Christian should not let him have his way or wish, and if the Christian, in resisting or refusing, is honestly actuated by love, then he is fulfilling the precept when he says 'No' to some petition, or when he resists robbery. We must live near Christ to make sure of our motives" (Maclaren).

III. THE GOLDEN RULE, verse 31. Note the greater force of this saying which we have called The Golden Rule, over the same in negative form as given by Confucius: "The thing ye would not have done unto you, do ye not unto others."

IV. GREATER GOODNESS REQUIRED OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS THAN OF "SINNERS," verses 32-35a. Love given for love is only glorified selfishness. *Even sinners love those that love* them; of you far more is expected. Show your love by unselfishness, by loving those who hate you as well as those who love you; in doing good to those who do evil to you as well as to those who do good to you; in lending to those from whom nothing will be received as well as to those who will return the favor.

V. KINDNESS AND MERCIFULNESS, 35b,36. Do all these things because you are sons of the Most High: be merciful even as he is merciful.

> It is an attribute of God himself,
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice.—Shakespeare.

The spirit of the Christian religion demands more than exact justice in our dealings with others; it requires that all transactions be enacted in the spirit of love, the doing exceeding abundantly above all that any man can ask or think.

VI. CHARITY IN JUDGMENT AND GENEROSITY IN GIVING, verses 37,38. The Golden Rule is now applied to judging, condemning, releasing. For verse 38 see below. By *bosom* is meant the fold formed by the loose garment overhanging a girdle. *For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again:* "Man's generosity is rewarded by God's grace."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other, verse 29. In the first century there was a tariff regulating the fines that might be collected for injuries received. "If a man has given his neighbor a box on the ear, let him give a *maneh.* If he has struck him on the cheek, let him give him two hundred *suz*" (a little over thirty-five dollars in value).

From him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also, verse 30. The universal and indispensable garments were two: first, the *chetoneth,* the inner vest or shirt, rather unfortunately rendered in our version *coat.* This was a long, loose garment, generally without sleeves, and reaching to the knees or ankles. It was retained at night. Over this during the day was worn the *me'il,* rendered *cloak* in our version, answering to our coat, which had loose sleeves, and was larger than the shirt. This was usually, especially when travelling, fastened round the waist by a girdle, the folds of which were used as pockets for carrying small articles. The *me'il* was also used at night as a blanket, thrown over the sleeper; hence the command in the law of Moses that the (outer) garment taken in pledge was to be restored to the owner in the evening, for he did not require it while working in the day, but needed it as a covering at night.—Tristram.

The Coat and the Cloak

THE GOLDEN RULE, verse 31. The Talmud declares that a Gentile came to Rabbi Shammai and asked to have the Law explained to him in the time that he could stand on one foot. Rabbi Shammai drove him off with his staff, and he then sought Rabbi Hillel, who fulfilled his request by answering: Do not to thy neighbor what is hateful to thyself, that is the whole Law. The "Golden Rule" of Confucius is similar to that of Hillel's Text Explained. Mr. Wu, formerly the Chinese ambassador to the United States, says that the passive life of the Chinese is due to this Golden Rule of Confucius and the aggressive civilization of the Anglo-Saxon to the Golden Rule of Christ. The Chinese have been standing still for centuries: they are beginning to adopt Christianity and the aggressive Golden Rule.

With what measure ye mete, verse 38. One of the characteristic sights of

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THE BETHLEHEM GRAIN MARKET

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. Luke 6.38

Palestine after the harvest has been gathered in, is the measuring out of wheat and barley which sometimes takes place in the cornmarket but more frequently in the courtyard of the purchaser's house. A professional measurer is always present on these occasions and in the presence of the seller and buyer or their representatives, duly proceeds to ascertain the contents of each sack. This is done by measuring out the grain in a circular wooden measure in the shape of our own bushel measure, but less deep, called in Arabic a *timneh*. The measurer seats himself crosslegged on the ground and proceeds to shovel the wheat or barley into the *timneh* with both hands until it is partly full. Next he seizes the measure with both his hands and shakes it strongly from side to side by means of two or three rapid half turns without raising it from the ground, in order that the grain may settle into a smaller space. This quick shaking of the corn is a striking part of the process and is very effective in forcing it to occupy less room. He then fills it further and repeats the shaking from side to side, going over the same thing over and over again till it is full up to the brim. As soon as this is the case he gently but firmly presses upon it with his hands so as to drive it into a yet smaller space. Finally, having first made a slight hollow on the top, he takes out some more handfuls of grain and very skilfully constructs a cone of corn upon the flat surface of the *timneh* which he has now filled. He continues carefully to build up this cone until no more grain can possibly be held and that which he adds begins to flow over and run down. Upon this the measure is considered to be full weight and it is emptied into the purchaser's sack. This is the universal method by which grain is meted out, and the price as always quoted at so much per *timneh*.—James Neil, in Palestine Explored.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What treatment of enemies have we seen in our Old Testament studies this year?

Our Lesson in Matthew and in Luke. In Matthew's Gospel, the appointment of the Twelve is followed by Christ's "Ordination Address" to which Augustine was the first to give the title of "The Sermon on the Mount," a title which had come into general use by the time of the Reformation. That Luke 6.20-49 and Matthew, chapters 5, 6 and 7, record the same address is sometimes denied. All that Luke gives is found in Matthew's "Sermon" save "the four woes." Scattered through Luke's Gospel are thirty-four other verses which correspond to words given by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus may have spoken the same words more than once, or Matthew may have grouped into one discourse words that were uttered on different occasions.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The mountain where the words were spoken may have been any of the hills near the Sea of Galilee, but tradition says it was Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, about five miles west of the lake. There were crowds near by, yet these words were spoken directly to the disciples, for as Luke says, "He lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said." The Master Teacher was now beginning his definite training of his chosen pupils.

Assign paragraph 51 of In the Master's Country.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Be careful not to take it for granted that your pupils have enemies. If it is suggested, they will search about in their minds for people against whom they have had some slight grudge, or whose superficial qualities somewhat irritate them, and then they will elevate these people to the rank of "enemies." Ordinarily happy young people are not conscious of enemies.

It is, however, important for people to learn how to transform the casual annoyances and affronts of life into occasions for forming and cementing friendships.

"Who is Angie Burke?" said the mother to her daughter. "Angie Burke," was the answer, "is a girl at school who doesn't like to be laughed at. And I offended her the other day. She said something and I laughed, and she got mad. 'Oh, you can laugh at me if you want to, Clara Rich, I don't care,' she

said spitefully. So I knew she did care and I was sorry. 'I don't want to,' I said, 'for I really love you.' She stared at me a few seconds and then she said, 'I beg your pardon, Clara. I'm awfully touchy.' And we've been great friends ever since."

You can get many experiences of affronts *borne* by your scholars, but you will probably have to hunt for examples of resentment *transformed*. Show that Clara's power to transform the situation was due to her habit of loving everybody. Give your pupils Edwin Markham's stanza—

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
HOW TO LIVE WITH OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. A little Navajo Indian at Jervell, New Mexico, was kept in at recess for some small offence. She opened her Bible and found Luke 6.31, and then with a sly twinkle in her eye as she watched her teacher, she repeated it aloud. What was the thought in that girl's mind? Was hers an apt application of the Golden Rule? Was it a correct application? Why not? What does the Rule mean?

The Golden Rule Requires the Putting of Oneself in the Other's Place. We do not serve others best by doing for them just what we with our circumstances and desires would wish done to us, but by doing for them just what we think would be best for ourselves were we in their circumstances and actuated by their desires. The physician should do for his patient what he would have done to himself were he in that patient's place; the employer should treat his employee as he himself would wish to be treated were he in the employee's place. The principle involves more trouble than the mere doing of a kindness to another; it requires thought, the effort of putting oneself in that other's place to find out what would be the best for that one in his position. And the higher the demand that we make for our own best, truest good, the less danger will there be of our doing a thoughtlessly kind deed for another that is not for his highest good. If a beggar asks to be fed and clothed that he may himself live in idleness, we shall fulfil Christ's Golden Rule as well as his rule of giving to him that asks by furnishing that beggar with the means of earning his own food and clothing.

The Golden Rule in Everyday Life. The Golden Rule is the sublime principle of conduct for this world and for all worlds. Failure to live by this law causes the chief sorrows and collisions among men.

Let each earnest man search into his words and ways, determined to find the special manner in which he breaks the Golden Law—his special habit that works injustice or unhappiness in his shop, his office, his home, his city. He will find, perhaps, that in the shop he is in the habit of misplacing tools, and thus hinders the work of his comrades; that in the office he is in the habit of being late in keeping appointments, and thus steals other people's time; that in the club he is in the habit of belittling worthy competitors, and thus joins the gang of thieves who steal reputations; that in the home he is in the habit of monopolizing the conversation, and thus fails to draw out the powers of others; that in the city he is in the habit of spitting on the sidewalk, and thus spoils the comfort of his townsmen; that in business he is in the habit of misrepresenting his goods, and thus robs under the cover of custom.

These are problems in the Golden Rule; and here are ample space and verge for building character, character which is the greatest thing in man.—Edwin Markham, in Success Magazine.

The Bearing of the Golden Rule upon the Love of Enemies. We all agree with Francis de Sales when he says: "It is easy enough to love those who are agreeable and obliging—what fly is not attracted by sugar and honey? But to love one who is cross, perverse, tiresome, is as unpleasant a process as chewing pills." Nevertheless, this is the real touchtone of brotherly love. The best way of practising it is to put yourself in the place of him who tries you or mistreats you, and to see how you would wish him to treat you if you had his defects and misunderstandings.

How Should We Treat Germany? Says President King of Oberlin College: "The worst possible thing that could have happened to the German people themselves was success in so wicked a war. On the other hand, the greatest kindness to them is that they should find that the war has been thoroughly unprofitable."

Frederic Harrison truly says of the Germans: "In all the world's history no race has been so drilled, schooled, sermonized, into a sort of inverted religion of hate, envy, jealousy, greed, cruelty, and arrogance. Man and woman, girl and boy, have been taught from childhood this inhuman vainglory and lust of power." Good will toward the German people desires to expel from them this religion of hate and put in its place the spirit of good will; unteach these lessons of inhuman vainglory and lust of power, and teach in their places the lessons of humility and human brotherhood. Good will would desire for Germany that as a nation she should awake to a realization of her national sin and her national shame; and, because she realizes the wrong she has committed, should voluntarily endeavor to repair the evil she has done. If she does not, then good will for Germany demands that she be compelled to repair that evil, whatever it may cost her. In the infliction of that cost may be one evidence of good will, for, if repentance is always followed by attempted reparation, it is also true that reparation enforced by a superior power often awakens a tardy repentance. It is not desirable for either Germany or the rest of the civilized world that she should be received back into the world's fellowship until she repents of her crime. A revived conscience is for her far more important than a revived trade. It is no spirit of good will for Germany which desires to treat her as a civilized nation before she becomes a civilized nation.

Sternly demand reparation; cordially welcome every sign of a new and better life; to this both justice to France and the spirit of good will toward Germany summon us.—Condensed from an Article in The Outlook, by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Give to Every One that Asketh thee. The following letter, written by Lincoln to one of his brothers, illustrates the meaning of this exhortation:—

"Dear Johnson.—Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, 'We can get along very well now,' but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct—what that defect is I think I know: you are not lazy, and still you are an idler. You are now in need of some ready money, and what I propose is that you should go to work, tooth and nail—for somebody who will give you money for it. And then to secure you a fair reward for your labor I now promise you that for every dollar you will between this and the first of May get for your labor I will then give you one other dollar. You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will follow my advice you will find it to be worth more than eight times eighty dollars to you. Affectionately your brother, A. Lincoln."

Give Good Measure and You Will Get Good Measure. Bargaining was the universal method in Christ's time. It is the method still in vogue in non-Christian countries. Christ told his disciples that this was not the way to do business. "Give," he said, "and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." No doubt this is true spiritually, but it is equally true commercially, and its commercial meaning is its primary meaning.

There are a great many hucksters in America who are also gamblers—some with dice, some with stocks, some with foodstuffs—whose sole idea of a good gamble is one in which they get all the profits and the other man all the losses. But increasingly business in America is done on Christ's principle: Give good measure and you will get good measure. The successful merchant knows what his goods have cost him, and he expects to sell them at a price which will repay the cost, provide a margin for rent, clerk hire, and the like, and give him a reasonable profit for himself. The current criticism upon the street of a too sharp business man is, "He is always on the make." Give good measure and men will give you good measure is not, as far as I know, an article in any of our Christian creeds. But to believe in it is to believe in one of the teachings of Jesus Christ.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Judge not, and Ye Shall not Be Judged. Lovers of Mark Rutherford—

and the number includes all who know him—will never forget Mary Mardon. She casts her tender spell over every fascinating page. And not least among her charms is her description of her visit, with her father, to the seaside. "The railway station was in a disagreeable part of the town, and when we came out we walked along a dismal row of very plain-looking houses. There were cards in the window with 'Lodgings' written on them, and father wanted to go in and ask the terms. I said I did not wish to stay in such a dull street, but father could not afford to pay for a sea-view, and so we went in to inquire. We then found that what we thought were the fronts of the houses were the backs, and that the fronts faced the bay. They had pretty gardens on the other side, and a glorious, sunny prospect over the ocean."

So much for Mark Rutherford and Mary Mardon. I fancy this kind of thing is more common than we often think. The lodgings from which we eventually obtain our loveliest views are frequently rather forbidding than prepossessing. They ban rather than beckon. We dub those dwellings dull from whose windows we afterwards catch glimpses of radiant glory.

For the most obvious application of this homely truth we need not go beyond the delightful characters whom we have already introduced. Turn back a few pages to Mark's first meeting with Mary. Whilst he debated vigorously with her father she sat silently by. He mentally accused her of intellectual paucity, of possessing a small mind, and of a stupid inability to discuss important themes. He looked upon her exactly as she had looked upon the repulsive houses by the seaside. But he was as utterly mistaken as was she. It turned out that she was being tortured that evening by a maddening neuralgia. He then penitently reflected that, had such anguish been his, he would have let all the world know of it. "And," he says, "thinking about Mary as I walked home, I perceived that her ability to be quiet, to subdue herself, to resist for a whole evening the temptation to draw attention to herself by telling us what she was enduring, was heroism, and that my contrary tendency was pitiful vanity. I perceived that such virtues as patience and self-denial—which, clad in russet dress, I had often passed by unnoticed when I had found them amongst the poor or the humble—were more precious and more ennobling to their possessor than poetic yearnings or the power to propound rhetorically to the world my grievances or agonies." This experience of Mark Rutherford in relation to Mary Mardon is clearly the precise social counterpart of her own experience in relation to the seaside lodgings. And later on, as every reader knows, she gave to him, as the lodgings gave to her, many a glorious outlook upon the infinite and the sublime.—Frank H. Boreham, in The Luggage of Life.

Christ's Ideal for Humanity. Every one of you, man or woman, may reach the greatest estate ever seen on this earth—a true character, four-square, the same inside and outside, and the same forever.

Men carefully keep the measurements of their height and they know what they weigh to an ounce. Mind you, I am speaking of men! The real measurement which should interest us is to be applied to manhood, and it is invisible. Its scale is exact. It balances to the same notch and it is not changed for any man. The poorest man, the richest man, the wisest man, the most ignorant man, they all step on the scale, set at the same pound and ounce. They all measure by the same foot and inch. There is no one of the ten spaces left out of the decalogue for any man. There is no other commandment added to extend the liberties of any man. God is no respecter of persons. You must square yourself by his law.—Dr. James Roscoe Day.

For Discussion. 1. The law of love. See chapter 16 of The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

2. The difference between easy good nature and genuine good will. "Beware the fury of a patient man" is good psychology. A "good natured" person often accumulates offences and because he has borne much feels sure that his final resentment is justified.

3. To apply the Golden Rule you must put yourself in the other's place. Adults in these days, when so many very properly refuse to grow old, are much interested in self-development. Set your class to giving themselves exercises in cultivating the constructive imagination which enables them to see another's position. It is one secret of success. For instance, when you have failed to carry your point—to sell, to buy, to keep an employee, to keep a place—sit down

and consider the state of mind of the other person. Then consider what conduct on your part would have changed matters.

4. The entire success of political economy is comprehended in the precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—Andrew P. Peabody.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What story of an anointing of Jesus do Matthew, Mark, and John tell? 2. Who was the woman? 3. Is there any ground for supposing that Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala were the same? 4. On what false identification does the term Magdalene, for a fallen woman, rest? 5. What are the lessons of the Parable of the Two Debtors? 6. Explain verse 47. 7. How does the story of Jean Valjean as told by Victor Hugo in Les Misérables illustrate this lesson? 8. Has the world changed in its attitude toward the sinner? 9. What need have we of imagination in order to help the sinful and sorrowing?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE GOLDEN RULE IN OUR LIVES

Beginning the Lesson. In many large cities in China "Self-examination Halls" have recently been established, where, after introductory music and a short address, thousands of civil and military officials, soldiers and senior students in uniform, sit quietly for a long time, each one busily examining his heart and life in relation to the law, his fellow-man and God, acknowledging the wrong he has committed and meditating how he can amend his faults. Were we to carry out the purpose of such a "Self-examination Hall" in our own homes we should have to ask ourselves whether or not we were living according to the Golden Rule. What is that rule? To whom did Jesus give this principle of right living?

The Golden Rule as Some People Practise it. It was a rainy day and two little children were playing indoors. "Let's play church," said Theodore, and Florence assented. "Now, I'll be the minister," Theodore explained, "and tell you what you must do, and you'll be the people and you must listen and do what I tell you." He climbed into a chair and began: "Florence, you must be a very good girl and do whatever your brother wants you to. If we wants your playthings, you must let him have them, and if you want any of his, you must let 'em alone. If he strikes you, you must forgive him. If you strike him he will tell mother and she will punish you."

Isn't this about the way some older boys and girls seem to feel? What does the Golden Rule say? Can that rule be carried out in our daily lives?

Well-Wishing versus Well-Doing. Superficially to wish people well is a habit easily acquired. On a zoneless, shoreless sea of well-wishing how many folk congenially are sailing! Their lives are not storm-tossed with hate nor wrecked by tempests of selfish ambition. Rather the breeze of a mild good will fills their sails, their skies are benignantly blue, and underneath is the gentle heave of kindly feeling. But they never land. The sea of their well-wishing has no shore. They arrive nowhere. They mean well but they mean well feebly. To no concrete deed of service, to no practical assumption of responsibility, to no costly and efficient expenditure of time, thought, energy, and money in useful work, do they ever come.

The peculiar peril of such well-wishing lies in the complacent opinion of oneself which it induces. Good intentions and kindly emotions are the most efficient opiates for an uneasy conscience. We hear an address on the need of China or the sufferings of the Armenians and we are deeply stirred. We wish well to all the yellow race, to all oppressed and stricken people everywhere, to Australian bushmen, the hill tribes of the Himalayas, the barbarians of Timbuctoo, to Asia, Africa, and the islands of the sea! In our swelling and inclusive sympathy—and that, too, without the need of stirring from the pew—we may gather up all the sick, afflicted, and despised on earth, feeling in secret that so compassionate a spirit must argue an admirable life. When a rapacious man revels in cruelty, or a truculent man seeks vengeance, or a miser worships mammon, one easily can see that they are wrong. But kindly wishing, such as rises in a man of humane and generous emotions, quiets the accusing conscience and, like a vampire, lulls the victim while it sucks his blood. For well-wishers, while often in appearance the most sensitive, kindly, sympathetic, responsive folk one meets, still deserve the scathing rebuke of James, the Lord's brother:

"If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2.15,16).

There comes a time in certain experiments in chemistry when the fluid in solution awaits the decisive jar of the operator's finger to make it crystallize. So does many a well-intentioned spirit await the resolute act of will which will precipitate his kindly feelings into practical deeds. A large part of true religion is fulfilled when a man takes himself deliberately in hand and walks himself up to tasks undone, concerning which he long has been wishing well. Sign that check; write that letter; pay that call; seek that interview; bear that testimony; accept that office; assume that responsibility—such crisp imperatives are indispensable, if well-wishing is not to prove the ruin of a serviceable life.—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Service.

"You Goot-a to Me; Me Goot-a to You." She lived in a little house across the street from an American home. One day she appeared humbly at the back door of Mrs. America's home to seek permission to go through the yard each evening as she went for the milk. It was a difference of four blocks and the request was readily granted. Mrs. Italy was overwhelmed with gratitude. Motioning vividly with her brown, bony hands, she said in broken English, "You goot-a to me; me goot-a to you."

Her program of "goot-a" began with an express wagon load of split railroad ties delivered by one of the Little Italies. This small beginning was reinforced almost daily by baskets of garden truck presented by the same brown-eyed cherub.

But real opportunity to be "goot-a" arrived one evening when Mrs. America was taken quite suddenly ill. She had gone to the porch when she felt the illness coming on, and there she remained, too sick to be moved for several hours. Mrs. Italy saw the disturbance and came shuffling over, her tongue refusing to say the hard American words, but her plain old face lighted up with sympathetic concern. The world over, human need requires no interpreter.

Without waiting for instructions, which Mrs. America's daughter had no time to give, and trained by her own long experience with suffering, the Italian woman went quietly to work. No trained nurse could have been more gentle and deft.

When the crisis was over, the other neighbors disappeared one by one. Not so Mrs. Italy. She had no intention of leaving Mrs. America while there was a chance of being needed. On into the night she sat, patiently watching until at last the sick woman awoke decidedly better.

Satisfied that her services were no longer necessary, she smoothed back the patient's hair and with a tenderly whispered "Goot night, and God and the Virgin Mary bless you," she slipped quietly away in the dark.

"You goot-a to me; me goot-a to you" truly was but the rendering into her language of certain old familiar words, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you."—Laura D. Soper, in The World Outlook.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. God expects great things of you; take care that you do not disappoint him.—Howard Duffield.

"However others act toward thee,
Act thou toward them as seemeth right;
And whatsoever others be,
Be thou the child of love and light."

I will permit no enemy to degrade my soul to the level of hatred.—Booker Washington.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VII. A story illustrating the Golden Rule.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What events does Luke record between our last lesson and this? 2. Describe the position of the guests at Simon's feast. 3. Why did Simon think Jesus could not be a prophet? 4. How had Simon failed in courtesy to Jesus as his Guest? 5. How much were the five hundred shillings worth? (See foot-note of your Bible.) 6. What was Jesus's special mission to the world, as given in 1 Tim. 1.15? 7. How do you think Simon felt at the close of the scene? 8. Give other instances of Jesus's ready sympathy. 9. When you feel sympathy for others, do you do anything about it? 10. When you have love for others, do you show it?

JESUS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS

Golden Text

Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1.15

LESSON Luke 7 . DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 51.1-10

REFERENCE MATERIAL Luke 15.1-32

LUKE 7.37 And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, 38 and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. 41 A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. 42 When they had not *wherewith* to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A WOMAN'S PENITENCE AND LOVE, verses 37,38. Jesus was being entertained at a banquet in the home of Simon, a Pharisee. "We are still in that epoch of transition when the rupture between our Lord and the Pharisees, although already far advanced, was not yet complete. A Pharisee could still invite him without difficulty. It has been supposed that this invitation was given with a hostile intention. But this Pharisee's own reflection, verse 39, shows his moral state. He was hesitating between the holy impression which Jesus made upon him and the antipathy which his caste felt against him" (Godet). *A woman* of the city who had been of ill fame entered with *an alabaster cruse of ointment.* Jesus was reclining on a couch in the customary manner at a feast, his head towards the table before him and his bare feet stretched out behind him, his sandals having been removed. Approaching from behind, the woman began to lay bare her soul, to give expression to her sense of sin, her sorrow and self-abasement, her penitence, devotion and love? By no means. As far as we know, she spoke not a word, but let her deeds show her gratitude for the forgiveness she had either already received from her Savior or was confident she would receive. Wetting his feet *with her tears,* she *wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet,*

Alabaster Cruses

and anointed them with the ointment. "To appreciate this act, we must remember that it was one of the greatest humiliations for a woman to be seen with her hair dishevelled. Similar acts of respect were sometimes, but rarely, paid to rabbis. A man once came to kiss the feet of Rabbi Jonathan, because he had induced filial reverence in his son. Anointing the feet was common among the Jews, the Romans, and the Greeks, especially at banquets" (Dummelow).

II. THE PHARISEE'S CRITICISM, verse 39. Simon was scandalized at the woman's act and the Lord's acceptance of it. Evidently Jesus was no prophet, Simon said to himself, or he would have detected the truth about the woman and would have spurned her. "He could see the woman that was a sinner, but he had never seen the man that was a sinner, although he had so often looked into the glass" (Watkinson).

III. THE PHARISEE'S LESSON, verses 40-46. At once Jesus showed Simon that he not only knew the woman's history but that he even read Simon's thoughts. *Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee,* thus Jesus arrested Simon's attention. And then he told him the Parable of The Two Debtors: one of them owed five hundred shillings and the other fifty shillings, but as neither of them had *wherewith to pay,* the lender forgave them both. *Which of them therefore will love him the most?* Jesus questioned, and Simon answered contemptuously, perhaps, carelessly certainly, with no thought of the bearing of the question, *He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. Thou hast rightly judged,* Jesus said, and then turning toward the woman he questioned, *Seest thou this woman?* "Having asked the question, he proceeded to help Simon to see her. The difference between Simon's attitude toward her and that of the Lord is, that while Simon was *not* looking at her, the Lord *was* doing so. Simon was judging her by her past. Jesus was judging her by her present. Are we not all in danger of Simon's mistake? It is not easy for us to blot out a past, and to free ourselves from all prejudice resulting from our knowledge of the past. Yet that is exactly what the Lord does. He knows the power of his own grace, and that it completely cancels the past, and gives its own beauty to the soul. When we allow memories of the past to blind us to the transformation wrought by grace we are proving how meanly we think of grace" (G. Campbell Morgan). Then Jesus reminded Simon of his omission of the common acts of courtesy due a guest—the water for his feet, the kiss of greeting, the oil for anointing—and contrasted therewith the lavishness of the woman's offerings. It was evident that, unlike the woman, Simon had not been brought to repentance or he would have shown greater love. "The way to love much is not to sin much, but to think much of sin" (Cox).

IV. THE RELATION OF FORGIVENESS AND LOVE, verses 47,48. *Wherefore I say unto thee:* note that Jesus is here explaining the reason for his *saying* that the woman is forgiven, and not the reason for the forgiving. *Her sins, which are many* ("Jesus did not ignore or make light of her sin") *are forgiven; for she loved* much. There are two possible interpretations of these words. One is that her love won the forgiveness. This was Coleridge's thought when he wrote:—

> She sat and wept beside his feet. The weight
> Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame
> And the poor malice of the worldly shame
> To her were past, extinct, and out of date;
> Only the sin remained—the leprous state.
> She would be melted by the heat of love,
> By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
> And purge the silver ore adulterate.
> She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
> Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
> And he wiped off the soiling of despair
> From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.

"But this is quite at variance (a) with the parable which precedes; (b) with the second half of the verse, which ought in that case to run, 'But he who loveth little, wins little forgiveness; (c) with verse 50, which states that it was *faith,* not love, which had been the means of salvation. The other interpretation is: Her many sins have been forgiven, and *I say this to thee,* because she loved much'; that is, *I say to thee* is not parenthetical, but is the main sentence. This

statement, that her many sins have been forgiven, is rightly made to Simon, because he knew of her great sinfulness, he had witnessed her loving reverence, and he had admitted the principle that the forgiveness of much produces much love. This interpretation is quite in harmony with the parable, with the second half of the verse, and with verse 50" (Plummer). *But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* Where there is little consciousness of sin, as in Simon's case, there is little love. And to the woman Jesus said, *Thy sins are forgiven.* "Jesus now confirms this for her conscience, and declares it for the judgment of her by others" (Garvie).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

When she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, verse 37. In some points of domestic life, the oriental maintains much greater privacy than we do; in others, where we avoid publicity, he courts it. An ordinary entertainment is a public affair. The gateway of the court, and the door or curtains of the guest-chamber, stand open. The animal which is to provide the staple of the repast, is killed and cooked in the open air. A long, low table, or more often merely the great wooden dishes, are placed along the center of the room, and low couches on either side, on which the guests, placed in order according to their rank, recline, leaning on their left elbow, with their feet turned away from the table. Every one, on coming in, takes off his sandals and leaves them at the door, socks or stockings being unknown. Servants stand behind the couches, and placing a wide, shallow basin on the ground, pour water over it on the feet of the guests. To omit this courtesy would be to imply that the visitor was one of very inferior rank. We can easily understand what a luxury this is to a travel-stained guest, who has walked over the hot sand of a Syrian road in summer. Behind the servant the loungers of the village crowd in, nor are they thought obtrusive in so doing.

Besides omitting the water for the feet, Simon had given Jesus no kiss. To receive a guest at the present day without kissing him on either cheek as he enters, is a marked sign of contempt, or at least a claim to a much higher social position.—H. B. Tristram, in Eastern Customs in the Bible Lands.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What incident in an earlier lesson shows Jesus's power to forgive sin? Who did the Pharisees say had power to forgive sin?

Between our Last Lesson and This. Jesus's address in Luke which resembles part of the Sermon on the Mount concludes with the Parable of the Two Foundations. Luke next records the healing of the centurion's servant, the restoring to life of the son of the widow of Nain, and the deputation from John the Baptist, who had been imprisoned, questioning whether Jesus was "he that cometh, or look we for another." Jesus's commendation of John follows.

The Two Marys and the Woman that was a Sinner. We are more familiar with the anointing of Jesus during Passion Week by Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, than we are with this anointing early in the Galilean ministry by the woman who was a sinner. There is no reason whatsoever for identifying this sinner with Mary of Bethany nor yet with Mary Magdalene, two women of good position and character who were among Jesus's closest friends.

The scene of the anointing by the woman that was a sinner was in Capernaum.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

If you will study the parables of Jesus, a few of the dialogues of Socrates, and some of the anecdotes of Lincoln, you will see how superior is instruction in anecdotal form. When you teach by telling a story, follow the method of Jesus rather than that of William de Morgan, or of Eden Phillpots, or of Henry James. Don't fill the time with unnecessary descriptions of natural scenery or personal peculiarities or with philosophic discussions. The stories of Jesus were directed toward making men wise and good; the novelist's stories must also make money.

Base your stories on particular or concrete conditions familiar to your students, make the action of the story simple, and move directly to your end. Read page 15 of our Introduction.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JESUS'S COMPASSION FOR SINNERS

Beginning the Lesson. Elizabeth Fry was once asked whether she had found any particular passage of Scripture useful in dealing with criminals under sentence of execution. "I can have no hesitation in answering that question," replied Mrs. Fry. "One passage I have found far more effective than any other; and the simple reading of it has proved most useful. It is the story of the woman who was a sinner, who came to the house of Simon the Pharisee when Jesus sat at meat and began to wash his feet with tears and wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. This has softened many hearts, and made eyes weep that never wept before."

"They were a strange trio, our Lord, Simon, and the woman—Simon barely courteous to Jesus, scandalized at the woman's intrusion and her vehement tokens of love and our Lord's acceptance of them. Then, in her defence, Jesus told him the Parable of the Two Debtors, with their respective debts and proportional love. And it laid down two principles: forgiveness precedes and is the cause of love; the measure of forgiveness is the measure of love.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Little Sins, Little Forgivenesses and Little Love. Christ recognizes the distinction between Simon and the profligate woman. Much harm has been done by insisting on the equality in God's sight of all varieties of conduct without faith in Christ. It is *not* the same whether a man breaks all the rules of morality and propriety, or keeps within them. There *are* great and little sins. Further, "little" here applies also to the difference between men's estimates of their transgressions. There is objective difference in the sins, subjective difference in men's consciousness of them. God has a finer balance than those by which we weigh conduct, and an act which, by our standard, is a great transgression, may be less tainted with sin than many acts of highly respectable people. There are great and small sins, but the difference cannot be estimated from the outside. And, properly speaking, no sin is small, since it affects wrongly our relation to God. We have only to go beneath the surface of our own hearts and realize what is there, to give up the delusion that we are respectable, little sinners.

Our Lord seems to limit real love to God to men who have experienced pardon. Nothing so brings the soul to self-surrendering love to God. The principle is a true one, though it must not be pushed to extremes, that the greatest sinners do often make the most fervent saints. A man's sense of forgiveness is the measure of his love. This explains the tepidity of forms of Christianity which make light of sin, and the coldness of many nominal Christians. Our guilt must be measured by the law: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. And when we realize it and the price paid for our forgiveness, our hearts will be touched with a passion of love unattainable by any other means.—Dr. Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

Jesus was the Friend of Publicans and Sinners. One of the most mournful words ever brought across the sea is the confession of Benedict Arnold. Asked by an American visitor if he, the traitor, "wanted anything," Arnold sadly replied: "Only a friend." A friend? Yes, the traitor wanted a friend as no untraitorous man ever wanted one. It is well enough to talk about the loneliness of undeserved sorrow; but the loneliness of deserved sorrow is still worse, for the desert of the thing has probably cost the sufferer his friends. I want my friend, because he is my friend, to stand by me when I have done wrong. That is the sort of friend Jesus proved himself to be. The jibe of his enemies was gloriously true. He was "The friend of publicans and sinners." And it was the kindling sense of his sympathy which helped turn sin-broken hearts towards the light.—Dr. George Clarke Peck, in The Method of the Master.

How the World Changes and for the Better! When Jesus Christ was here they said of him, "He receiveth sinners and eateth with them." They said it with a sneer. When William Booth, the head of the Salvation Army, did the same thing they said of him, "He receiveth sinners," but they regarded it as the glory of his life. The first century saw the Son of Man scorned and spat upon for receiving sinners and eating with them. The twentieth century saw William Booth received at court by King Edward VII and honored with a degree from Oxford University for receiving sinners. The world moves; there is

sunrise everywhere and the promise of a brighter day! And this great change has been wrought by the One who brought upon the earth a finer form of spiritual energy to renew the hearts of men.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in Five Young Men.

A Great Sin. There is an exquisite picture of the contrition of a soiled soul in Robert Falconer. Falconer is reading the story of the Magdalene to a company of sinners. "Some one sobbed again. It was a young, slender girl, with a face disfigured by smallpox, and save for the tearful look it wore, poor and expressionless. Falconer said something gentle to her. 'Will he ever come again?' she sobbed. 'Who?' said Falconer. 'Him—Jesus Christ. I've heard tell, I think, that he was to come again some day.' 'Why do you ask?' 'Because,' she said, with a fresh burst of tears, which rendered the words that followed unintelligible. But she recovered herself in a few moments, and, as if finishing her sentence, put her hand up to her poor, thin, colorless hair, and said, 'My hair ain't long enough to wipe his feet!'"—The Expository Times.

A Great Forgiveness. The story of Jean Valjean as told by Victor Hugo in Les Misérables illustrates this text. Convicted of stealing a loaf for the hungry children of his sister, he was imprisoned for two years. Having tried to escape, the imprisonment was spun out to nineteen years. He had entered prison a simple-hearted youth, with no criminal intentions. Nineteen years of punishment had turned him into a social Ishmael. Every man's hand was against him: his should be against every man. Finding hospitality, the first night of his release, only in the home of the good Bishop Bienvenu, by whom he was received and treated as an honored guest, he rewarded the kindness in the basest way. Rising in the dead of night, he took from the cupboard above the sleeping bishop's head the silver candlesticks which had been placed out in his honor at supper, and decamped. Caught and brought back next morning by the gendarmerie, he was confronted by the bishop, who forgave him, giving him the candlesticks. The forgiveness came in such a way that the man's whole life was changed from that morning. Gradually the remembrance of that noble pardon permeated his conscience and his heart, until he was transformed into the beneficent citizen and the man of love. To trace the influence of that forgiveness on the man's life is fascinating, is inspiring; and in doing so, we are able better to understand that he to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.—The Expository Times.

Imagination and Sympathy. Let me give you a rule in life for awakening your love and sympathy: first put yourself in the other person's place, then try to help him. You are compelled to associate with some persons who always seem to do every little thing in such a way as to make themselves unendurable. Now just imagine yourself in their place. Make their sorrows your own, give full credit to their virtues, and then try to help them. It may be that they have some anguish of soul, or some hidden disappointment, which, did you but know, would melt your heart with pity for them. If their surroundings were yours, it may be that you, too, would be far less endurable than you are.—D. L. Moody.

For Discussion. 1. The breadth of Jesus. See chapter 10 of The Character of Jesus, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

2. We have here a twofold reception of Christ: the reception of the Pharisee, or the reception of Christ into the house; the reception of the woman, or the reception of Christ into the heart. The Master is similarly treated today. How much today there is of the reception of Christ into the house only! The faith that permits him to cross the threshold is hesitating, superficial, inadequate. "*If* he were a prophet." Stupendous "if!" What a large part that little word plays today! Such faith will not save; it only condemns us. We must receive Christ into our heart, giving him our utmost confidence. We must understand that we are lost without him; that with him we are saved unto the uttermost. Let us not stop short of an unreserved, affectionate trust in him. Ask not Christ into your house to tolerate him, to question him, to suspect him; ask him into your heart by a living faith that opens wide the door, and he shall come in and make a feast of fat things.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

3. Christian sociability. Christian sociability is the permeation of life by friendly feeling, and the use of the common social intercourse of life to the highest ends. Our Lord did his work upon the earth in the common social

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relationships of life. We need to make our religion sociable and our sociability religious. We need to use our homes and friendships as the channel of the best expression of that which is the highest and greatest thing in the world—the love of God in Christ. Honest discussion of religious truth in our conversation, invitations to our table extended to those with whom we have Christian sympathies, even if our social connections have been different, affability and approachability in our ordinary intercourse, loyalty to Christian principles in all our relationships in business and work—these are a few of the ways in which Christian sociability can advance the interests of the kingdom.—Dr. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Jesus ask the afflicted man his name? 2. What probably suggested to the demoniac the name of legion? 3. How do you explain the immediate effect upon the demoniac of Jesus's words? 4. Priests in the Roman Catholic Church are ordained to be "exorcists": what does that mean? 5. How may we explain the destruction of the swine? 6. Why did the people want Jesus to leave their region? 7. When was Paul driven from a city because his teaching interfered with the profits of some of the people? (Acts 19.23 to 20.1). 8. How were the insane formerly treated?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Jean Bernand, a French artist, conceived the thought of presenting Jesus as a living force today by portraying him in modern surroundings among modern people. In a series of scenes which he painted Jesus alone is robed in oriental costume; all the others are in European dress and represent modern self-righteous Pharisees, modern sinners, and modern Christians. In his painting of Simon's Feast, the woman that was a sinner, clad in a Paris gown, lies prostrate at the feet of Jesus; Simon, well dressed, prosperous, self-satisfied, stands near-by looking disdainfully down on the penitent figure; and grouped about the table are other guests, their faces mildly pitying, indifferent, or cynical.

Such paintings do violence to our historical sense, but they are vivid applications of Christ's teachings. Who will describe the scene as it actually occurred?

Evidently the Pharisee had invited Jesus to his home out of curiosity. All men were talking about the wonderful Rabbi who could cure all manner of diseases, and the Pharisee wished to see and talk with him himself. But he considered Jesus beneath himself in social position, and therefore deemed it not necessary to show him the customary marks of courtesy, and by his omission of the kiss and the water for his feet and the oil for his head, all of which would have been offered to one considered an equal, he showed the greatest rudeness possible for an oriental.

Into this scene there came a woman who had been a sinner. What did she do? What did Simon think? Jesus read Simon's thoughts: what did he say to him? Text Explained.

How the Woman that was a Sinner may have Talked with Jesus. Mr. Begbie, in one of his beautiful studies in The Hand of the Potter, tells us of a woman of this class who was saved simply by the gift of a flower from the loving hand of a Christian "sister" in the streets of London.

"The flower was white. The idea of this whiteness pervaded her consciousness. She made a contrast of the whiteness of that flower and the spreading darkness of her own soul. She said to herself, 'I was once white as this flower.' She looked at the white flower through a mist of pain and said to herself, 'I wish I could be pure.' She covered her eyes with her hands, moved her face to the pillow, and wept."

These tears were the beginning of a spiritual process that ended in her complete salvation. The "white flower" unlocked the cabinet of memory. The vision of the past shaped itself into a resolution for the future. Perhaps this woman of the Seventh Chapter of Luke was one of those who listened to the tale of the prodigal. As Christ spoke of the far country and the swine-trough, she said, "That is me!" As he told of the new resolution, "I will arise and go to my Father," she said, "Would that were me!" As he pictured the Father

waiting at the window, looking at the door to welcome the child back with a kiss of love, she cried, "That *SHALL* be me"; and so with all the rags of her shame upon her, she came back to her Father, and in him found mercy.—W. Mackintosh Mackay, in The Woman of Tact.

The Friend of Sinners. Have read in class Parts IX and X of the First Passover in Longfellow's Divine Tragedy. Assign to different scholars the characters of Mary Magdalen, A Guest, Simon, and Christus.

In younger classes let some one read this poem by Henry Kingsley:—

The Magdalen at Michael's gate
Tirled at the pin;
On Joseph's thorn sang the blackbird,
"Let her in, let her in!"

"Thou bringest no offering," said Michael,
"Naught save sin";
Sang the blackbird, "She is sorry, sorry, sorry;
Let her in, let her in."

"Hast thou seen the wounds," said Michael,
"Knowest thou thy sin?"
"She knows it well, well, well," sang the blackbird;
"Let her in, let her in."

When he had sung himself to sleep,
And night did begin,
One came and opened Michael's gate,
And Magdalen went in.

The Problem Today. At the bottom of our social structure there is a stratum of "the bad." This term is used, for example, of castings that come from the molds defective. In this sense no one will question the statement that a certain stratum of humanity is bad. It is composed of the imbecile, the incompetent, the vicious and the criminal. It is found in all our great cities, but it is found also in the smaller towns, and even in the country. It is a sort of human rubbish-heap, and is the perpetual accompaniment and foil of our fair civilization. Perhaps we ought to say that it is a constant feature or element of our civilization. Every community has its "rubbish-heap," large or small.

But the phrase, "the submerged tenth," covers a larger fact than is indicated above. For despite all the efforts of society to reduce it, through the work of churches, Sunday-school missions, reform organizations and the multitude of other agencies, the stratum of human waste is only slightly diminished. There is a constant production of "the bad." They are recruited from the cradle. Besides, they are scarcely more than touched by most of the reformative and moralizing enterprises that have been mentioned.

This is the great sociological problem that confronts us: How shall we effectively deal with "the submerged tenth"? How shall we reduce the "human rubbish-heap"? How shall we check the production of "the bad"? These are questions to make boys and girls and men and women—think.—The Youth's Companion.

Jesus's Help for the Sorrowful. Sorrow's cry found Jesus alert and instantly ready for response. It appears that he never had any more important business on earth than to minister to those in trouble. He could be interrupted anywhere, at any time, as his disciples found to their dismay, by the call of suffering. He never even thanked his friends for trying to save his religious hours against the urgent need of a suppliant. He knew that sorrow is one need which can never wait patiently; hence he came in haste to meet it. He did not even delay to ask what kind of sorrow it was, nor how it had been caused, nor whether the results of it were likely to be serious. Putting aside every other business, he answered its call with passionate promptness, as a mother wakes at the faintest movement of her sick child. "How can you distinguish a cry for help?" asked a curious spectator of a life-saver on the bathing-beach at Newport. "With such a bedlam of noises made by the bathers, how can you tell when one is in distress?" "Very easily," was the reply. "Never once have I failed to distinguish the cry of distress from all other sounds. I can always tell it." Jesus was like that. An appeal for help rose piercingly clear

above all clamors and confusions.—Dr. George Clarke Peck, in The Method of the Master.

Let your Sympathetic Impulses "Hatch Out." Gertrude, the newly self-supporting daughter, casually remarked to the other members of the family gathered at breakfast: "Somebody ought to call on old Mrs. Martin. She can't get out at all, since she sprained her ankle, and she must be lonesome."

"Talk about being lonesome," suggested Clayton, senior in high school; somebody ought to write to Richard Felton. His little brother told me the other day that so far he had made hardly any acquaintances among the fellows at college, and he's working awfully hard, and homesick as all get out."

"I believe," commented Millie, first year high school, "that Miss Keese feels a good deal the same way. You know it's her first year teaching. We ought to have her in here some evening or take her out in the auto."

"If you are going to do a lot of nice things," this was from Dickie, who was down in the grades, "you better get Jimmy Ryther a pair of shoes. Some of my old ones would do. Why his shoes are simply awful! There's holes through the bottoms and through the top and his toes stick right out."

Wallace, now in the bank but recently a top-sergeant in France, said nothing; he merely jotted down a few words on a slip of paper, but he often did that and no one thought anything of it. Then one morning a week later he took that same slip of paper out of his pocket and turned to Gertrude.

"Did you call this week on Mrs. Martin?" he asked.

"Why, no," she answered, "but somebody ought—"

He turned to Clayton. "Clayton, did you write to Richard Felton?"

"Why, no. I meant to, but—"

"And, Millie, have you invited Miss Keese?"

"No, sir, I haven't, but I'm going to do it."

Dickie felt the question that was coming his way and intercepted it. "And I didn't get any shoes for Jimmy, but he's got a pair and they look just like my old ones. I believe somebody must have—"

Mother broke in upon the family's laughter. "Yes, somebody did," she answered. "Wallace reminded me of it and I found a pair in the attic and we gave them to Jimmy's mother. Then Monday evening Wallace and I called on Mrs. Martin, and Tuesday after school we took Miss Keese out in the car. Yes—and Wallace wrote, too, to Richard Felton."

"Well, I like that!" Millie turned upon Wallace in righteous indignation. "You and mother stealing our thunder that way!"

"Oh, you had a share," he answered. "I never would have thought of one of those things, and it's a sort of kind thing *thinking* of kind things to do for people. Only, of course," he added, more seriously, "it does not really help them any unless you do them. I had that rubbed into me over at Treveray, in Alsace. I had a mighty fine pocket-knife that I bought at a Y canteen and my bunkie liked it so much I thought I'd give it to him, but I didn't and the next day they took him off to the hospital, sick with the flu, and he never came back. I made up my mind then that I was through with just planning kind things. If I had any more kindly impulses, I was going to see to it that they hatched out."—The Wellspring.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Life is not so short but there is always time enough for courtesy.—Emerson.

There is a courtesy of heart allied to love; from it springs the purest courtesy in the outward behavior.—Goethe.

In the meanest mortal there lies something noble.—Carlyle.

Who can measure his compassion?
It is like yon blue above,
Bending o'er us, sinful, sinning,
Its unpillared arch of love.—James Buckham.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. VIII. Jesus the Friend of Sinners.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who were "the twelve," verse 1? 2. What does verse 3 mean? 3. Where was the country of the Gerasenes? 4. Why was that demon possessed not put in an insane asylum? 5. Why did the man call himself Legion? 6. What resulted from the loss of the swine? 7. What lesson is there for you in the words of Jesus to the man in verse 39?

JESUS THE GREAT MISSIONARY

Golden Text

The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19.10

LESSON Luke 8 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 47

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 4.23; 9.35-38

LUKE 8.1 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve, 2 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto them of their substance.

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had demons; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in *any* house, but in the tombs. 28 And when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not. 29 For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For oftentimes it had seized him: and he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the demon into the deserts. 30 And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many demons were entered into him. 31 And they entreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they entreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave. 33 And the demons came out from the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were drowned.

38 But the man from whom the demons were gone out prayed him that he might be with him: but he sent him away, saying, 39 Return to thy house, and declare how great things God hath done for thee. And he went his way, publishing throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done for him.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JESUS THE GREAT MISSIONARY, verse 1. *It came to pass soon afterwards*—Luke gives no definite information as to time—*that Jesus went through cities and villages,* a great Missionary accompanied by his twelve disciples, and everywhere he preached and brought *good tidings of the Kingdom of God.*

II. THE MINISTERING WOMEN, verses 2, 3. *Certain women* whom Jesus had healed were also in the company. Among them was *Mary that was called Magdalene,* probably because she was from Magdala, a village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. She was so called to distinguish her from other Marys. We are also told that she had been released from *seven demons,* and by this is meant, not that she had been depraved, but that she had been violently insane and had been restored to her right mind by the power of Jesus. Another woman was *Joanna, the wife of Chuzas,* who was the steward or manager of the house of Herod Antipas. Mary, Joanna, *Susanna, and many other* women *ministered unto them of their substance,* paid their own money for the food and other necessaries of Jesus and his disciples. "While accepting gifts freely offered, Jesus rebuked the scribes for their exactions, 20.47."

III. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, verses 4-15.

IV. THE LAMP ON THE STAND, verses 16-18.

V. NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL KINSHIP, verses 19-21.

VI. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE, verses 22-25.

VII. THE GERASENE DEMONIAC RESTORED, verses 26-39. After the storm was calmed the ship anchored on the eastern side of the lake, *at the country of the Gerasenes.* On landing Jesus was met by a naked demoniac whose abode was *in the tombs.* These tombs were caves, either natural or hewn out of the rock, which were used as burial places. They were always outside the cities, usually in lonely regions, and because they contained the bones of the dead they were regarded as unclean. Syrians today believe that evil spirits haunt such places. "The symptoms recorded in the narratives of demoniacs seem to fall under three heads—they were the symptoms we would today attribute to insanity, epilepsy or to the paralysis of some particular function. The indications here point to insanity" (Dr. Charles R. Brown). The man fell down before Jesus, crying, *What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God?* "The Most High God" was a heathen name for Jehovah, found also on Phœnician inscriptions. As Jesus bade *the unclean spirit come out from the man,* the latter cried: *I beseech thee, torment me not.* "The demoniac identifies himself with the demon, and the expulsion of the demon to the abyss (verse 31) is the torment dreaded" (Garvie). That it was acute mania is evident from the violent paroxysms, which are indicated by his having been bound with chains that he had broken and had made his escape to the wilderness.

What is thy name? Jesus asked. "It would appear that Jesus's command had not at once effect, for some desire for cure, some faith in its possibility, was a condition of his exercise of his miraculous power. Jesus now seeks to win the maniac's confidence, and so secure his submission. To ask the name was to help the man to recover some sense of his personal identity, and enable him to distinguish himself from the demons possessing him, so that their expulsion would not be described by him as *torment.* But so firm a hold has the delusion of possession by a multitude, that instead of giving his own name, the maniac gives himself a name descriptive of that multitude, and says *'Legion'"* (Garvie). A legion was a troop of four or five thousand. The demons entreated Jesus not to *command them to depart into the abyss,* Hades, their place of punishment, but to let them enter *a herd of swine feeding on the mountain. And he gave them leave,* Luke says. "The words are probably a misunderstanding of Jesus's command (in accordance with his method of adapting his speech to the thoughts of the sufferer) to the demons supposed to be inhabiting the man to depart. Matthew has the one word 'Go,' or 'Depart!'" "Jesus faces abnormality at its worst and believes that God is willing and able to cure it; he believes that he himself has the spiritual power to be the agent of its cure; and he believes in the man as capable of cure. Doubtless the calm approach of that strong, pure Man, perhaps the only One whose eyes had never shown fear of the maniac, stopped him in his headlong course and silenced his wild cries. Then Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. He appealed to the man, asked him his name, humored him in the idea that the evil spirit might go into the swine, and with his authoritative 'Begone,' compelled the man to realize that he was freed. Whatever evil he had, he need not have. So Jesus believed, so he made the man believe. It was the spiritual appeal to his manhood, and the man in the maniac responded" (Soares).

The next thing that happened was that the swine, perhaps frightened by the loud shrieks and wild gestures of the demoniac, *rushed down the steep* incline *into the lake, and were drowned.* Many people, rightly believing with Whittier that "nothing can be good in him which evil is in me," are troubled by this loss to the owners of the swine. The best answer is that the good wrought for the whole countryside by the cure of this dangerous man far outweighed the loss to the owners. Matthew says that no man could pass by that way because of him. This may not have been the first herd of swine that had been driven into the sea by his frantic cries. The keepers fled to report the fact, in the city and the country round about, whereupon the people flocked to the scene to see what had happened. They found the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, *clothed and in his right mind.* Seized with fear lest he might destroy further property, they asked Jesus to depart from them. He went back by boat to Capernaum. The man begged to go with him, but Jesus made him return to his own house and *declare how great things God had done* for him. The man obeyed and published the news everywhere."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Who had demons, verse 27. Belief in demons was widespread in the ancient world. The earth was supposed to be full of demons who were seeking a habitation in human beings. It is interesting to recall here the fact that in the Moslem world today one who has an inclination to gape closes his mouth quickly, for gaping is considered the work of the devil who would thus enter and take possession of one. The Hindus are said to have the same belief, and they twirl their fingers before their mouths when gaping so as to prevent a devil from getting in.

He abode in the tombs, verse 27. Like all other countries at this time, Palestine had no homes for the poor and afflicted. A group of red-roofed buildings known as "The Asfurijeh," the Lebanon Hospital for the Insane, five miles from Beyrout, is the only one in Syria today where the mentally diseased are scientifically treated. Patients are brought there from all over Syria.

And he said, Legion, verse 30. Dr. George Adam Smith was once among the tombs of Gadara when some peasants dug up the gravestone of a Roman soldier, which gave his name and age and service, and also stated that he was of the Fourteenth Legion. As he read the last detail,—and the word is still stamped on other stones in the neighborhood—Dr. Smith realized as never before how familiar that engine of foreign oppression had been to this region, so that the poor madman could find nothing fitter than it to describe the incubus upon his own life.

A herd of many swine, verse 32. Although the law forbade the eating of swine's flesh, there was no law against the raising of swine. There were many Romans dwelling in the Decapolis, east of the Jordan, and for them the swine were doubtless destined.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. The title of our lesson is "Jesus the Great Missionary": what activities of Jesus have we already studied which show him in this light?

Time and Place. Our text follows immediately in Luke our lesson of last week.

The country of the Gerasenes was probably the region in Perea about Gersa, or Kersa, which was built upon the steep eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

In the first lesson of this Quarter I recalled to your mind the work of the Department for Utilizing Surplus Material, of the World's Sunday School Association, in the hope that you would interest your class in sending in time for Christmas (before November first) packages of things which missionaries can distribute. Dr. Samuel D. Price is the Superintendent of this Department, with headquarters at 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City, and a letter sent to him (stamp enclosed) will quickly bring a reply giving you the address of a missionary of your own denomination in need of what your class can furnish. State in your letter your denomination in full. Packages should be sent directly to the missionary. Parcel post rate of twelve cents a pound prevails in Korea, Japan, parts of China, Philippines, Liberia, Cuba, Porto Rico, Mexico, and South America.

"Dressed dolls are eagerly desired. A suitable size is about ten inches long. 'Go-to-sleep' eyes add much to the value and little to the cost. The dolls can be simply dressed, but not in white, which is generally the sign of mourning in oriental countries. Other things that could be included are small toys, games that do not require much knowledge of English, ribbons, work bags, pencils, paints, knives and marbles."

At any time during the year small Bible lesson picture cards and large Bible lesson picture-rolls are eagerly awaited in any quantity by the missionaries.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JESUS'S POWER OVER EVIL

Beginning the Lesson. Have you ever wondered how Jesus and his twelve disciples could give up their occupations and go about doing good with

no visible means of subsistence? You have recalled the climate, and the simple manner of life in Palestine, and you have realized that their needs were not comparable to the needs of thirteen men in New England, for example. You have remembered that Jesus was always welcome in that Bethany home of Martha and Mary, and doubtless in many another home; that he and his disciples could wrap themselves up in their abbas and gain a good night's rest on any hillside; that they traveled about mainly on foot and needed no carfare; and that their clothing never went out of fashion. But have you not overlooked the fact that there were certain women of means who "ministered unto them of their substance"? Who were three of them?

The Cure of the Gadarene Demoniac. See The Text Explained.

Lycanthropy. The wolf men who wandered in masses through southern Germany and parts of Italy in the Dark Ages were the terror of Europe. They were humans, who by a process of degradation, and mass hypnotism, displayed the predatory instincts and ravenous ferocity of the wolf. And not alone that of the wolf; but others were visibly possessed with the bestial natures of the lion and the tiger, but in the main, the wolf predominated, and the term lycanthropy covered these divers manifestations.

Europe has changed since then; and it is the opinion of her savants that animal possession has ceased to exist. This is not wholly correct, however, because I was once permitted to attend a séance in an Arab mosque, in which I witnessed an extreme manifestation of animal possession.

The first hour of the séance followed the usual Aisawia course; first of mass hypnotism; followed by the eating of scorpions and snakes; the swallowing of broken glass and nails; and nearly nude men hurling their bare bodies upon the thorny spikes of large branches of the prickly cactus.

In the midst of the orgy there appeared to pass over the hypnotized mass a sudden pause. A quietness of a few moments ended the din. It was as though the breath of another spirit passed through the place. And then I was startled to hear a sound I had often heard before—that of a camel, when forced to kneel for a load, throatily grumbling his guttural disgust. I looked about to discover his whereabouts, puzzled as to why a camel had been admitted to a mosque, when nearer to me came a roar as of an angry lion, and there in front of me a man was crouching as a lion ready for a spring. The transformation then became general. To the roar of the lion and the tiger's note, was added the bellowing of bulls, the bark of the dog, and the howl of the wolf, until the place became a zoological garden of mad humans.

The pandemonium of conflicting animal sounds, emanating from beings who for the time appeared to have lost all the attributes of humanity cannot possibly be described.—J. J. Cooksey, in The Christian Herald.

The Sympathy of Jesus. How many of the people in the neighboring village of Gadara knew of this man, or had tried to help him? But Jesus, by an instinctive sympathy, never went into any neighborhood without finding at once the sick, the poor, the bedeviled. We live in our secluded social circles; we do not know even the maids in our kitchens, the workmen in our factories, the bootblacks and the newsboys who serve us. We deal with our fellows on a cash basis, not on a basis of human interest. And as for the conditions of life in the slums of our own communities, in the jails and asylums, among the sick, the vicious, the homeless, the unemployed, the mentally defective, how little do many of us know—or care! But imagine Jesus in one of our communities! He would not live in a social cocoon. He would soon know all the worst needs of the town.—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Service.

Modern Treatment of the Insane. Once every lunatic was thought to be possessed by evil spirits and was treated with rigorous cruelty. Humane treatment of the insane began with Phillippe Pinel, a Frenchman who died in 1828. "A powerful painting by Robert Fleury pictures the visit of Pinel to the Salpetriere, Paris, in 1795. The asylum courtyard is filled with violent women chained to posts and in many cases manacled and under other forms of restraint. Pinel stands calmly in the midst directing an attendant as he strikes off the iron bands and chains. Those thus freed seem to have lost their violence, and some of them kneel to kiss his hand. We are told that Couthon, president of the Paris commune, said to Pinel: 'Are you mad yourself to wish to unchain these ferocious beasts?' 'No,' he replied, 'but I am certain that

these wretched beings are so violent and crazed only because they are chained. When they are no longer treated thus I believe they will calm themselves and perhaps grow rational.'"

Today no one receives more skilful kindness than do the patients in most of our insane asylums. "The finest medical skill, the tenderest care, the best buildings and appliances are now bestowed on those who once were abhorred and forsaken."

He that Believeth on Me, the Works that I Do Shall he Do also; and Greater Works than These Shall he Do. At the Student Volunteer Conference held in Des Moines in 1919, Dr. Sherwood Eddy gave the following account:

When I landed in India twenty-three years ago, in 1896, I began to work among a few of these now 80,000 English-speaking college students of India. I can remember the first little group of boys. I observed the work of the Spirit of God and the influence of other lives upon them.

Here is an old, faded photograph of a group of these boys. Let me tell you about the first three. There was a poor low-caste boy, Asaria,—from a caste so humble that his people were excluded from the temples of Hinduism, not allowed even to worship the idols in these temples. The second boy was Santiaga Peria. His people were outcast dregs of society, lower than the dogs. The dogs could go down the Brahmin street, but not these people. The third boy was a poor Syrian.

When I went back this year after years of absence I looked up, among others, these three boys. I found that the first boy was now Bishop Asaria, the first Indian Anglican native Bishop. I visited his diocese and moved among some of his 60,000 Christians. I saw them on Easter Day. I saw the transformation of life. There standing with the Bishop is a man of the thief caste. He spent ten years in prison. He was a housebreaker. He is now converted as Saul into Paul. He has gone out and won two whole villages for Christ. He shepherds the flock as an honest carpenter, receiving no other stipend. He is an unpaid, unanswerable witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and under that young Bishop I find 60,000 unpaid witnesses to the living Gospel that has transformed that part of India.

The second boy is today moderator of the South Indian United Church, comprising the Presbyterian, the Congregational, the Dutch Reformed, the Free Church of Scotland, the Established Church of Scotland and the Boswell Reformed Missions.

Many years ago I saw the third boy get up and go out, determined to wrestle like Jacob until day-dawn in order to yield his life to Christ. Then he went back to that old Syrian Church, asleep for a thousand years. Today he is a bishop and leader of the Reformed Syrian Church. He asked me to come to speak to his people at Travancore, which I did, addressing there, at a point miles from the railway, the largest Christian audience in the world.

The Duty of Christ's Representatives. It is the duty of the Christian to undertake the ministry of sympathy whenever there is an opportunity to exercise it, even to the evil and unthankworthy. This is his office because he is the minister and representative of Jesus, whose life was spent in sympathetic ministry. And the Christian is at such an advantage. He has consolation to offer in every case. There are many cases before which the unbeliever must remain dumb. But he who can offer the gospel of Jesus need never be dumb.

The wonderful thing about this power is that we all have it; not all in the same degree perhaps; but none of us is so lacking in this endowment as to be incapacitated for the ministry of sympathy. The feeling is in our hearts, but we may not have accustomed ourselves to utterance. We can easily give ourselves the needful training if we will. We do not need to wait for the accidents of life to make demands upon our sympathies, but may ourselves find the opportunities for their exercise. It is well to have one or two lives to which we systematically minister. An old or ill person whom we regularly visit, a poor person into whose dreary life we bring a little warmth and brightness, a child whom we keep in constant touch with and guide as we may. Life is full of such opportunities of helpfulness the fulfillment of which requires very little of time or money, yet which enable us to increase the value of our lives to others, and, if that were the thing to consider, are in their reaction upon our own character, of unmeasured significance.—Dr. J. G. H. Barry.

Christ Lived for Love. Men live for something: for what did Christ live? And the answer that leaps upon us like a great light from every page of the Gospels is plain—he lived for love. If he did not care for praise or honor, if he regarded even the preservation of his teachings with a Divine carelessness, it was because he had a nobler aim in view, the love of men.

And yet it was less a conscious aim than the working out of his own character. Fishermen by the sea see him but once, and instantly leave their boats and follow him. A man sitting at the receipt of custom, a hard man we should suppose, little likely to be swayed by sudden emotions, also sees him once and finds his occupation gone. Mature women without a word spoken or a plea made, minister to him of their substance and count their lives his. When he sleeps wearied out upon a rude fishing boat, there is a pillow for his head, placed there by some unknown adorer. The men he makes his apostles, all but one, count his smile over-payment for the loss of home, of wife and children. Countless throngs of ordinary men and women forget their hunger and are content to camp in desert places only to listen to the music of his voice. Wild and outlawed men, criminals and lepers and madmen, become as little children at his word, and all the wrongs and bruises inflicted on them by a cruel world are healed beneath his kindly glance. He lived in such a way that men saw that love was the only thing worth living for, that life had meaning only as it had love.

This is his divinity,
This his universal plea—
Here is One that loveth thee.
Dr. W. J. Dawson, in The Empire of Love.

For Discussion. 1. Did Jesus believe in demons? See Biblical World, July, 1920.

2. Obsession and demon possession; the insane, the unbalanced, the abnormal.

3. Christ's healing ministry today.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Compare the instructions given The Seventy with those given The Twelve: would the circumstances call for similar instructions? 2. What prohibition given in the latter is lacking in the former? 3. Of what was the number *seventy* significant? 4. What does "a son of peace" mean? 5. Explain the rest of the sixth verse. 6. Explain verse 11. 7. Explain verses 17-20. 8. How was Jesus's faith in The Seventy challenged? 9. How will you answer these questions of Sherwood Eddy's: Am I a winner of men? If not, what is the cause of my being a fruitless branch on the living vine?

FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
TELLING THE GOOD NEWS AT HOME

Beginning the Lesson. Assign to different scholars the characters in The Demoniac of Gadara, Part VII of the Second Passover in Longfellow's Divine Tragedy, and let it be read in class.

Two Scenes. Christmas Evans, the great Welsh preacher, tells two scenes of our lesson thus:—

I. Never was there such a running, and whipping, and hallooing; but down go the hogs before they are aware of it. One of the men said, "They are all gone." "No, sure, not all gone into the sea!" "Yes, every one of them, the black hog and all. They are all drowned! The devil is in them! What shall we do now? What shall we say to the owners?" "What can we say?" said another. "We must tell the truth—that is all there is about it. We did our best—all that was in our power. What could any man do more?"

So they went on their way to the city to tell the masters what had happened. "John, where are you going?" exclaimed one of the masters. "Sir, did you know the demoniac that was among the tombs there?" "Demoniac among the tombs? Where did you leave the hogs?" "That madman, sir"—"Madman! Why do you come home without the hogs?" "That man who was possessed with the devils, sir"—"Why, sure enough, you are crazy! You look wild! Tell me your story, if you can, let it be what it may." "Jesus Christ, sir, has cast the unclean spirits out of the demoniac; they are gone into the swine; and they are all drowned in the sea; for I saw the tail of the last one!"

II. The children, looking through the windows of the house, see a man com-

ing up the road, and they say, "Mother, father's coming," and the mother springs to the window to look, then runs to the door and closes it, saying, "Children, keep still, your father is a maniac." And they close every door and window, and the children, looking through the chinks of the window say, "Mother, it is not father. Father used to come bounding up the way, this man is walking. Father used to come shrieking, this man is coming quietly." And the mother says, "Keep still. It might be your father." You can almost hear their hearts beating, when there is a hand on the latch, and it does not yield. Finally, there is a rap at the door, but they do not answer. Then they hear a voice they have not heard in years. It was the voice she had heard when he asked her to be his bride. It was the voice he used when God gave them their first child. They hear him saying, "Mary, open the door. Let me come in. I have seen Jesus." She springs to the door and throws it open, and when he comes in he brings heaven with him.

A Hard Command. Jerry McAuley in a famous talk represented the man as saying after his restoration: "Well, Lord, I guess I'll go along with you and have an easy time and folks will think I'm respectable." But Jesus said to him: "Go back among the people that knew what a miserable fellow you were, and tell them what wonderful things God has done for you." And Jerry pictured the man going back, "getting upon an old barrel and telling what a miserable wretch he was until Christ found him."

Jesus sent the man away. How often that experience comes to young people! Annually thousands of young men and young women who have had inspiration, guidance, and comradeship at college are sent away from it all. Boys and girls who have gained fine ideals and formed good habits in their homes are sent away to make their own way in the world. Business houses train employees and send them away. In the factories and kitchens of our land are young men and women who have been sent away from their countries across the sea, bringing with them habits, talents, powers, skill that it has taken their race thousands of years to acquire. What instances can you cite of those whom necessity or choice has driven away from their sources of inspiration? What do you know about their troubles and triumphs, their successes and failures?

The demoniac was furthermore directed to declare to his own home people the great things God had done for him. Often it is difficult to spread the good tidings in one's home. The young doctor who goes home to work into his father's practice and is called "Johnnie" by his patients; the young lawyer who pleads in the home town before a jury whose apples he stole a few short years before; the college girl who returns home after four years' absence and is expected to fulfil her parents' anticipations; the hardened sinner who is converted and returns to his old companions;—all these know what means that command to return home and there bear witness of a Christian spirit.

An American soldier who won a *Croix de Guerre* knew where he needed to make good. In answer to a comrade's question as to why he did not wear it, he explained: "I was no good back home. I let my sister and my widowed mother support me. I was a dead beat. And now they have given me the *Croix de Guerre* for something I did at the front. I am not going to put it on. I am going back home first. I am going to win out there. I am going to show my mother that I can make good at home. Then I will put on the *Croix de Guerre*."

Return to Thine Own House. Think of the pessimist going back home, shining with radiant hope. The funeral garb of melancholy has been changed for the bright wedding garment of Christian confidence. Or think of some fretful, complaining spirit turning up one day clothed in the garment of praise. What an angel in the house! All these may seem to be very common-place ministries as compared with the romance of going to Greenland's icy mountains or India's coral strand, but this is the sort of service which is going to transform the world. Return to thy house! Go and make a heaven of home, and God's kingdom will come with mighty power and grace.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Witnessing in the Home. A great life insurance company in New York had invited all its agents throughout the country to a business conference in New York, and while in attendance one of the agents from the west insured the barber, the elevator man, and a waiter in the restaurant, all of whom had been employed for years by the insurance company in its great building. No

one had thought to offer policies to these men in the home office building. Are there not many like that great insurance company? Are there not members of our own household or of our own circle of friends, of our own Sunday-school or day school class, who may rightly expect us to have a personal interest in their spiritual life?

It is not only by telling others what great things the Lord has done for us that we witness for him. More often it is by the silent witness of our daily lives that others are convinced of the power of Christ. And usually it is more difficult to be Christlike in the home than it is outside the home. In the home comes friction, a thousand and one little things arise that try one's Christian spirit more than do the greater annoyances and troubles from friends and foes beyond the home. "Lord, make me easy to live with" is a prayer that every one should pray. A number of friends recently were speaking in highest praise of the beautiful character of a woman devoted to public philanthropic works, when her husband added the highest praise of all, "All that you have said of her is true," he quietly remarked, "but what she is to you and your boards and in all her charities, that and far more than that she is in her home life."

What Influenced a Skeptic. In stating at a public meeting the reasons for his change of belief, Dr. Lincoln, once the most noted skeptic in the state of Maine, said: "I can say it is not caused by argument. I have never heard nor read an argument to which I did not think I could give a satisfactory answer; but there was one argument—a living argument—that moved every day and often before my window, in the humble, benevolent, Christian life of my neighbor, Deacon Perry, which I could not withstand."

Witnessing that Won. A young man was converted at a camp-meeting. Kneeling down at home afterwards he asked God to keep him faithful, and to help him to be a true witness for him. He did not speak about his conversion to any of the family at first, but the new-found joy shone in his eyes, and revealed itself even in his whistle. One evening, some ten days afterwards, he said to his brother, "Tom, I was converted last week." His brother replied: "Henry, we've all been watching you. Mother says you look and talk like a new being. Father says you are the most agreeable one about the place. Do you reckon God will do for me what he has done for you?" The result of that boy's witness-bearing was the conversion of the whole family.—Unknown.

What All Christians Can Do. "The great majority of Christ's disciples are not required, like Moses, to guide a nation; not called, with David, to declare God's faithfulness in the great congregation; not chosen, with Paul, to confess Christ before kings. The Master sets before them the open door of their own home. To confess Christ in the home circle, by one's life and by one's words, requires just as much courage and strength and patience and love as it does to bear witness to him in heathen lands. Possibly the former is an even harder commission to fulfil."

In certain New York churches the members are in the habit of listening carefully to the sermon which they hear on Sunday, and fixing in their memories a point that has an especial appeal to them. Then during the week they tell it to the men that gather round them at the club, to the young men they chance to sit next to in the street car, and wherever else an opportunity can be made to pass on the truth that has meant much to them. Many men who formerly found no time for Christian service are becoming enthusiastic workers. Why may you not adopt their method? Every week our lesson brings us some great truth. If you treasure it in your minds, and recount at home or among your associates the striking incidents told to enforce the truth, you may be certain that you are working for the Master, and that the seed thus sown will bear fruit.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Show the new life where the old one was lived; it will cost, but it will count.—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

"The light that shines farthest shines brightest at home."

Pupils' Note-Book Work. IX. The Story of the Gerasene Demoniac.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of the sending out of The Twelve, Luke 9.1-6. 2. Why did Jesus bid The Seventy take no purse, wallet or shoes? 3. What was the wallet? 4. Why were they not to salute anyone on the way? 5. Why were they told not to go from house to house? 6. What advantages were there in going two by two? 7. Where was the field of these missionaries? 8. What was their method of work?

JESUS SENDING OUT MISSIONARIES

Golden Text

The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. Luke 10.2

LESSON Luke 9.1 to 10.24 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 28.16-20
REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 10.1-42; John 17.17-21; 20.21

LUKE 10.1 Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. 2 And he said unto them, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; and salute no man on the way. 5 And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house. 6 And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again. 7 And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, 11 Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you: nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh.

17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. SENDING OUT THE SEVENTY, verses 1-3. As Jesus had sent out The Twelve on a special mission tour (9.1-6), so he now sent out *seventy others.* The text reads, Now the Lord *appointed* seventy others; but the appointment was for a special service, not as in the case of The Twelve, for permanent work. "The number *seventy* is significant. It was the number of the Sanhedrin. As Jesus had already set up twelve new Patriarchs of the New Israel, so now he establishes a new Sanhedrin. The Jews deduced this number from the seventy elders of Num. 11.16,24. Or the number may symbolize the nations of the earth, for the Jews held, agreeably to Gen. 10, that the human race was made up of seventy peoples. If, as is not unlikely, the appointment of The Seventy took place about the Feast of Tabernacles, the ritual of the past may have had something to do with the number, for then seventy bullocks were offered on behalf of the Gentile nations" (Dummelow).

Jesus sent these men and women *two and two* (for mutual help and companionship) into the cities and villages which he himself was planning to visit after their preliminary work. The multitudes are like a vast field ready for reaping, he told them; the only trouble was that there were not enough reapers. My Father is the Husbandman (John 15.1), *the Lord of the harvest, pray ye him therefore, that he send forth laborers into his harvest,* he said to them. "Everything vital in the missionary enterprise hinges on prayer" (Mott). And then he bade them answer their own prayer in saying to them, *Go your ways; behold I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.* "No teeth nor claws, no swords nor guns! They went as Paul went into Macedonia, a troubled region then and a troubled region now, with the gospel of peace. They went as Livingstone went into the heart of the dark continent, with no weapon but the great love in his own heart. They went as John G. Paton went among the cannibals of the South Sea, disarming their opposition by the potent influence of their

own unselfish devotion. They went, taking their lives in their hands, relying upon instruction and persuasion, kindness and self-sacrifice, for the spiritual victories they were set to win. 'Lambs among wolves,' kindness pitted against cruelty—this is the line of spiritual advance" (Brown).

II. THE DIRECTIONS GIVEN THEM, verses 4-11. These men were to travel light; they were to take with them *no purse, no wallet, no shoes.* They were to have no money in their girdles, which answered the purpose of a purse, and no provisions in their wallet, which was their provision basket (the Greek word translated *wallet* may also mean *begging-bag;* Jesus did not want his messengers to beg their way from "outsiders"), and no shoes in addition to the sandals which they wore. Their message was vital, they must hasten, hence they could not stop to *salute* any one *on the way,* for oriental salutations consume much time: see Light from Oriental Life.

On entering a house, they were to utter the familiar salaam, or friendly greeting, of *Peace be to this house;* a prayer that the household might be blessed in every respect. "Sam Walter Foss has the faculty of putting into the homely vernacular of New England the noblest ideals. So in one of his poems he says,

When you meet a man you know,
Walk right up and say, Hello!

By this he means exactly what Jesus said to his seventy representatives—Be natural, friendly, cordial men. Find yourselves on the level of daily life where men live, meet them, and greet them there, and then lift them higher by your message. Nothing is gained for the kingdom of Christ by his representatives assuming the grand manner" (Dr. Ozora S. Davis). *And if a son of peace*—a beautiful phrase for *one inclined to peace—be there,* continued Jesus, *your peace shall rest upon him.*

"But what were they to do when their friendly salutation was met with scorn, and the hospitality that was due a stranger was denied them? Often men who are great and noble in situations where popular favor surrounds them, lose their self-mastery under the irritation of little rebuffs and slight personal opposition. Jesus understood this, and so he told the men who were to represent him in the villages: If your good-will is repulsed, you, at least, shall not lose it, but *it shall turn to you again,* and you shall keep calm and sweet and dignified under the irritation and the defeat" (Dr. Ozora S. Davis). "What a beautiful idea, that the unheeded *Peace!* comes back and blesses the heart that wished it, as if courteous and kind words never went unrewarded!" (T. R. Glover).

In the home which welcomes you, *remain,* freely enjoying its hospitality, for the sustaining of my messengers is not a charity but a debt, and *the laborer is worthy of his hire.* Do not lose time in going about *from house to house:* see Light from Oriental Life. *Eat such things as are set before you:* do not ask for special fare. *Heal the sick, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* "It had come nigh because the Christians were there speaking the truth of the kingdom, living the life of the kingdom. The kingdom of God means the sway and rule of the Divine Spirit, and it was there in the lives of those men. By the subtle, irresistible power of spiritual contagion it would be communicated to many another life" (Brown).

If the city is unfriendly to you, *go out into the streets thereof and say* (the declaration is to be publicly made), We repudiate responsibility as to your fate by this symbolic action, that of shaking off the dust that cleaves to our feet, but we bid you remember *that the Kingdom of God is come nigh:* "it had been brought nigh to bless, but, refused, left behind a judgment."

III. THE FATE OF CITIES THAT DID NOT ACCEPT CHRIST'S MESSAGE, verses 12-15.

IV. THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY CROWNED WITH SUCCESS, verses 17-20. *The Seventy returned with joy* and reported that *even the demons had been subject to* them *in the name of Jesus.* "What gifted men they are, and everybody acknowledges it!" Jesus gently rebuked their self-satisfaction. "'In this rejoice, not that the devils are subject unto you,' he said, 'but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' Do not rejoice in your command of a gift, but rejoice in your relation with your God" (Jowett). And then Jesus by a figure of speech declared that in their success he saw a prophecy of the ultimate conquest of his Kingdom over the whole world.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Carry no wallet, verse 4. There is a special meaning, suggested by one of the monuments, which suits the context. It was erected in the Roman Imperial period at Kefr-Hanar, in Syria, by a person who calls himself, in the Greek inscription, a "slave" of the Syrian goddess. "Sent by the lady," as he says himself, this heathen apostle tells of the journeys on which he went begging for her, and boasts triumphantly that "each journey brought in seventy bags." The word here employed is πήρα (pera): it clearly means the beggar's collecting-bag. The same special meaning would make excellent sense in our text: there is to be no earning and also no begging of money.—Adolf Deissman, in Light from the Ancient East.

Wallet, Staff, Sandals

Go not from house to house, verse 7. When a stranger arrives in a village, the neighbors, one after another, usually invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of such hospitality is frequently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds amongst neighbors.—Wm. A. Thompson, in The Land and the Book.

Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you, verse 11. The rabbis taught that the dust of heathen lands defiled. They said, "The dust of Syria defiles, as well as the dust of other heathen countries." The act, therefore, signified that the city that rejected them was no better than heathen.—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When the prophet Ezekiel received his commission, what did he learn about his responsibility in regard to those who would not listen to his warning?

Luke 8.39 to 10.1. The restoring to life of the daughter of Jairus and of an afflicted woman, the sending forth of The Twelve on a mission tour; the perplexity of Herod as to who Jesus was; the feeding of the five thousand; Peter's acknowledgment that Jesus was the Christ; the foretelling of the passion; the transfiguration; the curing of the epileptic boy; the dispute about rank; the inhospitality of the Samaritans; the exactingness of discipleship—all these things Luke records between his account of the cure of the Gerasene demoniac (our last lesson) and the sending out of the seventy missionaries (our lesson for today). Knowing that the time with his followers was now short, Jesus wished to train as many as possible to carry on his work after he should leave them.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest: go your ways; behold I send you. A teacher of sixteen young men thought herself unfitted for Sunday-school work, because no conversions had occurred in the class (as reported in The Herald and Presbyter), and resigned her position. Both superintendent and pastor had noted the unflagging interest of her pupils, and they would not consent to her giving it up. In her anxiety she prayed more earnestly for the Holy Spirit's help. One day while thus pleading, she was so strongly moved to go and see a certain one at his home that she at once yielded, and in that home she told her anxiety, and when prayer was suggested the pupil knelt with her and soon yielded his heart to Christ. Thus encouraged, she visited another, and another, in turn, as opportunity opened, till she saw the whole sixteen won to Christ and added to the church. As vacancies occurred in her class, others joined, who were also converted. These pupils passing out into the business of life were urged by her to write annually a letter as to their Christian life, till finally, as the years rolled on, she was re-

ceiving over two hundred letters from ministers, lawyers, mechanics, farmers, physicians, and others from various parts of the world, still busy in pulpit, in Sunday-school, or in other church work. What if this teacher had not followed up her own prayers?

Jesus sent out The Seventy two and two. To Mrs. Lamoreaux, one whom she characterizes as "one of the best soul-winners I know," confided this experience: "When I was a boy my teacher said to me one day: 'William, you are the only boy in the class who is a Christian: shall you and I work together to win George?' And we worked together to win another and another. My teacher is still living, and I am going to see her, and get down before her and say, 'A part of everything I do is due to you, because you said "together."'"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
OUR HOME-MISSION WORK

Beginning the Lesson. In The High Calling, Dr. Jowett declares that the measure of our Christian growth may be estimated by the circles of our sympathetic interest. What is the circumference of our outlook? he questions. Are my sympathies represented by my umbrella, and do they merely cover myself? Or are they something like a garden tent, and do they cover a family? Or are they like a great marquee, and can all the people in the village find shelter beneath its roof? Or still grander and nobler, do they find their symbol in the over-arching firmament, and do they embrace "all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues"? What is the scope of my sympathetic circle? They tell us that the concentric rings in the interior fibre of a tree record its age and the story of its growth. And most sure I am that the concentric rings in the soul-interests of a Christian tell the story of his growth in grace. How large is the circle of our prayers? Are our prayers merely concerned with our own things, or do they reach out to grasp the needs of a race?

This was the lesson Jesus sought to teach his disciples one day when he bade them pray—for what?

The Work of the Rank and File. They were quite obscure men and women—not one of them is known to us by name. The twelve apostles are known everywhere. The greatest church in the world is St. Peter's at Rome; the court of the British Empire is called the Court of St. James; and a multitude of infants that no man can number are named for St. John. But no one can give the name of a single one of the Seventy.

These last are the quiet, nameless, untitled and almost unknown people whom Christ sends forth. They are not conspicuous enough to get into history or even into the newspapers. Their only recognition is that of the Father who seeth in secret, yet the rating of the Master ranked them above many of the "wise and understanding" in the significance their service held for the advance of his Kingdom.

They were all laymen apparently—"babes" in theological understanding, Jesus called them—yet by the genuineness of their devotion they, rather than "the wise and prudent," were allowed to share intimately in the counsel and holy activity of their Lord. Unordained, unofficial, untitled Christians they were, sent forth to make the world better by living the life they had learned from him. There are no words of depreciation to be spoken touching the valued service of great leaders, but the hope of the world rests at last upon those plain people who make up the rank and file in the army of the Lord.

This laymen's mission appears to have been immensely successful. The Seventy came back and reported, "Lord, the devils are subject unto us through thy name." They had won notable victories over the forces of evil. The sick had been healed, the sufferers who were sometimes regarded as demoniacs were restored to sanity and usefulness, the sinful held by the tight grip of evil habit as in a vise had been released, to become free and brave in the cause of righteousness. All this achieved by those plain people who found the forces of evil subject to them when they made their effective approach in the name of Christ!

Jesus rejoiced—literally "exulted," and it is the only instance where we are told that he actually "exulted"—in the success of the movement. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."

He spoke in the most sanguine terms, what is to be regarded as a prophetic

word rather than a cold statement of accomplished fact, of the ultimate success which would crown this movement. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." The ultimate overthrow of the kingdom of evil through the power exerted by these plain people saturated with his spirit stood before his wise eye as a sure outcome. "Kings and priests," he said to the privileged Twelve, "have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them."

Then he cautioned the successful Seventy against the unwisdom of exalting the triumph of an hour above the sober significance of the fact that they were definitely committed to a certain mode of life. "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you—rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." The sudden rally which drives back the enemy's line at a single point, the swift winning of some hard-fought skirmish, the well-won victory in some one hard-fought battle, does not for a moment rank in real significance with the permanent enrollment of men and women as citizens of that kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom.

We cannot all be major-generals or be numbered with the twelve apostles, with churches in Rome named after us, and our names inscribed on the walls of the New Jerusalem. But every life may catch the spirit of Christ, enroll itself under the banner of Christ, and by the useful service rendered cause the heart of Christ to exult when he sees that life coming up to give an account of the warfare waged against the powers of evil.—Condensed from The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

He Sent Them Two and Two. We have all admired the wondrous wisdom of that shrewd, sagacious plan. There is no evidence that Jesus relied much upon conferences, congresses, and the like. As a permanent factor in character-building he trusted to the influence of a companion rather than to the inspiration of a crowd. He was a great believer in those walks, side by side, along the winding Galilean highways. He attached extraordinary value to those heart-to-heart talks beneath the overarching branches, when the tired comrades camped together at the close of the long and trying day. And so, all through the ages he has been pairing us off. Here you have Peter and John; there you have Paul and Silas; yonder you have Barnabas and Mark. The Franciscan friars, the Dominican monks, the Lorillard preachers, the travelling pairs of evangelists, all furnish corroborative evidence of the wisdom of the sacred scheme. The Pope and General Booth have little in common; but they both saw the advantage of sending out the emissaries two by two. The sisters may wear convent garb or coal-scuttle bonnets; it does not matter; the principle is the same. There is no need to limit to a narrow domestic significance the great primal affirmation that it is not good that a man should be alone.—Frank W. Boreham, in The Silver Shadow.

A Faith that is a Challenge. The power that comes to men when some one believes in them must have come to these followers whom Jesus trusted with his work. We often note the power that was theirs through their faith in Christ; consider today the inspiration that came from Christ's faith in them. How they must have encouraged themselves in times of failure and disheartenment by saying: He believes in us; even though we are ignorant and sinful, he believes in us; he has trusted his work to us, and for all our inability he has faith that we can carry it to triumph! Their faith in themselves and what they could do with God's help must have been almost altogether a reflex of his faith in them.

The faith that lifts and motives life is not simply our faith in the Divine, but the faith of the Divine in us. The fact that God has faith in us is not alone a source of comfort; it presents a stirring challenge. It means that he is in earnest about achieving his great purposes in human life, and that he is counting upon us to help.—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Faith.

A Social, Sympathetic, Spiritual Ministry. Jesus pictures his disciples at table, and shows that he is called to a great *social* ministry. "Eat," he says, "such things as are set before you." That is extremely important. You can see at a glance what Jesus meant. His men are not to be recluses, monks, anchorites. They are to get into the homes of the people; they are to sit down at the tables of the people; they are to eat the food of the people; they are to talk the talk of the people; they are to live the lives of the people. "Eat such things as are set before you." Take the people, that is to say, as you find them. Don't expect too much of them; and don't pretend to be superior to them. They

are very human—food-eaters all of them. And you are very human—a food-eater, too. Sit down beside them, then, in a frank recognition of a common humanness.

I remember once hearing Mr. Egerton Young, the apostle of the North American Indians. He told us of his first entrance among the wild people of a certain Indian tribe. The braves greeted the pale-face with the most cordial salutations of welcome, and then they gave a great feast in his honor. The Indians in feathers, and belts, and leggings, and moccasins, and war paint—squatted round in a circle, giving the missionary a place among them. Then the feast began. A huge haunch of venison was brought and handed, steaming, to the chief. He took it with his immense brown hands, lifted it to his mouth, tore a shred of meat from it with his teeth, and passed the joint to the brave sitting next. He did likewise, and so it was handed down from one pair of grimy, greasy hands to another, each man burying his face for a moment in the savory meat, until at last it reached the astonished missionary. Mr. Young told us that when the remains of the haunch reached him, his stomach turned at the idea of gnawing at the bone that the redmen had left. But he saw that to refuse was to abandon all hope of ever winning them. And so, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, he gulped down all squeamishness, and pressed the morsel to his lips. He "ate such things as were set before him," and he won his way into the hearts of the untamed tribesmen by doing so. That is very fine.

Jesus pictures his disciple at the bedside, and shows that he is called to a great *sympathetic* ministry. "Heal the sick," he says. And that, too, is vastly important. We may not be able to lay our hands upon our poor sick folk and raise them, all aflush with health, from their beds of pain. It is not intended that we should. The early Church had special gifts for special purposes. She had to present her credentials. Today the Church stands duly accredited. Moreover, there is this to be considered: the Church has produced the medical profession, and there is therefore no further need for her ministers to exercise special gifts of healing. But that does not by any means dispose of this second great word of command. There are drops of healing virtue that distil from compassionate glances and from sympathetic words. We must never lose a chance of being in the house of trouble, by the bed of sickness, or in the valley of tears.

Jesus pictures his disciple on the doorstep, and shows that he is called to a great *spiritual* ministry. "Say unto them," he says, "that the Kingdom of God has come to the door." And in the pronouncement of that sovereign word the minister rises to the height of his glory. At the table he is a little less than his people. They are his host and hostess; he is their guest and accepts their hospitality. At the bedside he is on *an equality* with his people. He sits beside them; shares their sorrows and their sufferings. But here he rises *above* his people. He is *supreme*. He is herald and prophet and ambassador all in one. "Say unto them, The Kingdom of God has come to the door." And the thing that will break your heart in the Christian ministry is the fact that whilst you were able to take all heaven to every doorstep on which you stood, there were so few—so very few—houses in which you could get it any farther. The door opened, and *you* were asked in; but the Kingdom of God they would not ask in. But there were some homes into which the Kingdom of God *had* entered, and there were others into which you yourselves have taken it. And those glorified homes into which the Kingdom of God enters become miniature heavens themselves.—Condensed from The Golden Milestone, by F. H. Boreham.

What are We Doing for Missions? We *pray* to the Lord of the harvest to send out reapers to gather it into his garner. But what *do* we besides praying for it? Do we work for it? Suppose a farmer should pray to the Lord for an abundant harvest next year, and should never, in seedtime, turn over one furrow or scatter one handful of seed, what would we think of him? Would not his neighbors regard him as a monomaniac or a simpleton? And wherein does he excel such a one in wisdom or in prudence who prays to the Lord to send out reapers—missionaries, or evangelists—to gather a harvest of souls, when he himself never gives a dollar to a missionary or the value of it, to enable him to go into the field? Can such a person be in earnest, or have one sincere desire in his heart to effect such an object or purpose? We must confess that we could have no faith either in his head or in his heart.—**Alexander Campbell.**

Have you a "Ticket"? Mr. George Sherwood Eddy told of a predicament in which he was placed by a rule made by the Chinese of Canton requiring "a ticket" before admission into a Christian meeting was permitted. "The ticket in this instance was not a piece of cardboard, but was a person prepared to receive the message of Christianity," said Mr. Eddy. "I pushed my way through the crowd and presented myself at the door. The usher stopped me and asked me if my ticket was with me. 'Ticket?' I asked in surprise, 'why, I am the speaker.' 'We know you are the speaker, Mr. Eddy, but the rule is that no one is to be admitted without a ticket, and we can make no exception in your case.'" Mr. Eddy was nonplussed. He then decided to meet the conditions and received an inspiration; he went across the river, sought out Sun Yat Sen, the first President of the Republic, urged him to accompany him to the meeting, and with this distinguished Chinaman as his "ticket" had no difficulty in getting past the usher. Later he gave an evangelistic address.—Interchurch Bulletin.

For Discussion. 1. The distinction between Christianity and all other systems of religion consists largely in this, that in these others men are found seeking after God, while Christianity is God seeking after men.—Thomas Arnold. 2. The minister and his salary. The laborer is worthy of his hire. "But if ever a herald of Christ falls under suspicion of caring more about life's comforts than about his work, good-bye to his usefulness."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was the lawyer's question wise or foolish? 2. What is the second great commandment called in Jas. 2.8? 3. What individuals or groups of individuals today correspond to the priest and Levite? 4. The robbers? 5. The inn-keeper? 6. The Good Samaritan? 7. What is the definition of the word *neighbor?* 8. How widely do we use the word now? 9. Why is it more difficult to be a good neighbor in the city than in the country? 10. What did Cain mean when he asked, "Am I my brother's keeper"? 11. Have you learned to look for those to whom you can be neighborly rather than for those who can be neighborly to you? 12. Where are we as a class failing to prove ourselves neighbors? 13. Keep note of how many opportunities you find this week to prove yourself a neighbor to another.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HERALDS OF THE KINGDOM

Beginning the Lesson. "Office-boy wanted": does such a sign remain long in a store-window? Why not? The call for workers of any sort in store or shop or factory of a great city quickly brings a response from more applicants than are needed. Jesus once sent out a call for workers which has been repeated through the centuries and has not yet had a satisfying response: what was it?

The Field, the Work, the Method, the Spirit. Jesus said, "the harvest is plenteous"; in another place he said, "the fields are white"—i.e., ripe. Other people have observed the same facts and spoken about them, but they do nothing. Jesus was not like that. He saw and acted. He was quick to seize the opportunity and supply the workers. He ordered out seventy to take up the work that was waiting and pressing.

Their field was not the foreign, but the home field. They had not to pack up and take ship and sail to the other side of the world. All they had to do was to start out on foot and visit the villages and towns of the district. There is a big work to be done for Christ over the seas, but there is also a big work to be done for him in our own land. What about your church and school, Loyal Temperance Legion, and Christian Endeavor Society?

Their work was to be one of preparation. They were to prepare the way for Christ, and were to do it by preaching and healing the sick. All work for Christ is of that kind. We can't make people repent, or believe, or give up their sins and lead a new life. But by what we say, and the kind and beautiful things we do, we can touch their hearts and minds and incline them to good things, so that when Christ comes along and calls them they will at once respond. Don't you like preparing things—getting your room ready for the chum who is coming to stay, or getting the garden ready for the tennis party? But there is no pleasure so great as that of getting things ready for Jesus.

Their method was to be a very sociable one. They were to work together—

to go in "two's." There are some things you can do by yourself. But in most of our work for Christ we are all the better for company. We cheer and comfort and inspire each other, and the work is more interesting and successful. Besides, some of us are so shy and weak that we must have somebody with us, or we cannot go to work at all. One of the blessings of Christian service is the companionships it brings you.

Their spirit was to be one of unselfishness. If they were invited to a house, they were not to say, "It is a cottage, I shall not be comfortable there," and refuse to go. If a meal was set before them they were not to say, "It's poor food. I want something better than this." They were to go where they were asked, and eat what was provided. They were not to trouble about money or dress. In fact, they were to think only of their Master and their work. Jesus knew that you could not do God's work if you were always thinking of yourself, and so bade them forget themselves in their service. We must have the same spirit if we are to do any good. Self in work is a great stumbling-block. I think these men were loyal to their orders, for they were able to come back with joy and say, "The very devils are subject unto us." They would never have had that success if they had not been obedient and loyal.—C. E. Stone, in The Sunday-school Chronicle.

An African's Reasoning. When the African lady heard the number *seventy* it seemed too good to be true; when did they ever dream of seeing seventy missionaries sent to their country? "What a big land Palestine must have been," she said, "to get whole seventy!" Then I saw in a flash the sarcastic meaning of her hint. "Big?" I replied, "no, look! here is the map of Palestine; now compare it with the size of Lubaland. Why, watch the measurement: one, two, four, ten—yes, our parish is ten times larger than small Palestine." "No," said the woman, "there must be some mistake, for if they got seventy then we should get seven hundred, for we are ten times bigger than they are!" What an eye-opener on the much vexed question of "How many should go?" Here is a clear, candid study in the equality of ratios. It is all a sum in simple proportion *a la* Luke X. Here you are far from the realm of mere question and conjecture. If Palestine, a tiny dot of territory, a mere pin point in the world's immensity, if, I repeat, Palestine got whole seventy, then we should get seven hundred, and more.—Dan Crawford, in a Letter.

Any Church Member Can Evangelize. Isn't that the work of men specially set apart or peculiarly endowed? No, evangelizing is simply spreading the good news, letting the man nearest you know, constantly through your life and at proper times through your lips, that in the religion of Christ which you profess you have gotten hold of something big, emancipating, immensely interesting. Character, as some one has said, is not taught, but caught.

Your presence, your gift, your prayers, your Christian life and the contagion of your cheerful and robust faith—these things you owe to the church with which you have solemnly covenanted. One can do all these things at once without waiting for a pastoral assignment to a specific duty or any word from any kind of headquarters. These are the staple virtues and activities of the Christian life. They gave beauty and power to our religion when it was young. They will yet make it a resistless force in the life of the modern world.—Editorial in The Congregationalist.

All that God Needs. All that God has ever needed is plenty of helpers. His splendid dream of redemption goes unrealized as yet because he has had so few helpers. There are many folks telling what sort of world this would be if they had been the architects of it, but so far the number of workmen has been small. Everything that needs to be done to make this the earth of the redemption will be easily accomplished when God can count upon helpers enough.—George Clarke Peck, in Forgotten Faces.

At Moody's Coat-Tail. A fine story is going around in reference to Rev. Paul Rader, pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago.

When Dwight L. Moody, in 1898, went to Denver for an evangelistic campaign, his first meeting was a men's rally in the Coliseum. On reaching the hall he found it packed to the limit, so that it was difficult for him even to enter the door. There he found a twelve-year-old boy crying because he could not "get in to hear Moody." The evangelist said to him: "Grab my coat-tail, and hold right on." This the boy did, and as an opening had to be made for the man to get in, the boy at his coat-tail followed. Little could Moody realize at that time

what part the boy clinging to his coat would take in carrying forward the evangelistic work inaugurated by him. How it would have cheered his heart if he could have looked forty years ahead and seen in the boy he was befriending, Rev. Paul Rader, the present pastor of the great Moody Church in Chicago! That church, though not wealthy, is now giving $35,000 a year for foreign missions, besides doing a wonderful work in the home city.

Boy Missionaries. Why not? We have boy scouts, boy soldiers, boy musicians, boy poets, and boy billiard players. Why not boy missionaries? There are those who think that if India is ever to be won for Christ, it will be by those who, while yet boys, have learnt something of the love for, interest in, and joy of the work.

We had read and heard much of the revival in Korea. We had heard of the "days of service" in that church. We resolved to have one, too, here in India. So it was that ten boys of the C.M.S. Boys' Boarding-school, Calcutta, promised to give up fourteen days of a four-weeks' holiday to preaching the gospel to non-Christians.

We ranged from fifteen to eighteen years old, most of us of the latter age, and we went to a Christian village in Nadiya, some eighty miles from Calcutta, where there was an old mission-house in which we could camp out, all living as a band of brothers, led by a kaka (uncle) and dada (elder brother).

The villages around us were inhabited by Hindus and Mohammedans, with a Christian village here and there. In many of these places were schools. Two or three of us would invade a village school and politely ask the master if we might speak to the boys. In all cases we were allowed; and one boy took one class and another boy another. The children listened well. There were also talks with boys whom we met or who came to see us.

At night we divided into two large bands and trudged off with our lantern and slides to one of the near villages. The lantern address never failed to draw an audience.

The non-Christians at least learned that Christian boys know something about their own religion, and can give a reason for the hope that is in them—an object lesson surely to those who think religion is only for grown-up men, and not for women, much less children.—One of Them, in The Church Missionary Gleaner.

For Whom are We Responsible? A young son of a missionary heard his father say to the native congregation that if each Christian in that particular city could win fifty, the whole city would be Christianized. Twelve-year-old accepted his share of the responsibility without reservation. Every day at prayers a boy friend of his, a Hindu, was remembered, and such successful personal work was done that in a few months his friend was baptized. Radiant with happiness the boy watched the baptism, and then said hopefully to his father, "Only forty-nine left for me." How many people are there in our particular corners of the field for which we are responsible and we alone?—Helen Barrett Montgomery.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. We cannot believe in Christ for ourselves without believing in him for the world.—Phillips Brooks.

As the Father hath sent me, I send you.—Jesus.

We are all missionaries, the sent ones of the King; and not our fields but our faithfulness matters.—George L. McKay.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. X. The Story of The Seventy.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does "made trial of" mean, verse 29? 2. Where in the Old Testament are the two commandments of verse 27 found? (See margin of Bible.) 3. Do you love God in the way that Jesus would have you love him? (If you like to talk to him, and sincerely strive to please him, then you can honestly answer "Yes.") 4. If you do not love your neighbor, can you love God? 5. Where was Jericho, and for what was the neighborhood noted? 6. What did it cost the Samaritan to be neighborly? (Had to walk, was delayed, expended thought and sympathy and money.) 7. Which of these two questions does the parable answer, Who is my neighbor? or, Whose neighbor am I? 8. Show that we are all dependent upon others. 9. What stories of neighborliness can you tell? 10. How can you obey the command to go and do likewise? 11. During this week note carefully what customary acts of yours must be changed if you obey the rule of verse 27.

STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Golden Text

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Leviticus 19.18

LESSON Luke 10.25-37 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 41.1-4, 10-13

LUKE 10.25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A GREAT QUESTION, verse 25. *A certain lawyer stood up and made trial* of Jesus. He tested him, tried to trip him, by his great question of *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* To him the question meant: What acts, such as fasts and prayers and sacrifices, can I do which will have special merit and will therefore win for me the reward of eternal life?

II. A GREAT ANSWER, verses 26-28. What is the result of your poring over the law? Jesus questioned in his turn, and the lawyer quoted in answer Dt. 6.5 and Lev. 17.18. In Mt. 22.37-40 Jesus united the two—love for God and love for one's neighbor—but that the lawyer did so makes one surmise that he was led to this by some remark of Jesus that is here omitted. *This do and thou shalt live,* said Jesus. "The fact that the questioner knew the truth was of no potential value to him. His knowledge and practice of the forms were of no value unless they expressed themselves in practical help to men" (Hough). "The reward of life is life. The Book of Revelation describes a man who is faithful even unto death, and receives as his reward a crown. And what is this crown? It is not a crown of gold or gems, but a crown of life. The reward of faithfulness unto death is the gift of increased life, and to receive that gift is to enter heaven. The man had heard the great command, 'This do, and thou shalt *live,*' and as he proceeds from one to another sphere of service, he discerns how rich a reward life itself may be" (Peabody).

III. A CAPTIOUS QUESTION, verse 29. The difficulty of loving God so wholly did not trouble the lawyer, but *desiring to justify himself,* to show that he had not asked a question so simple that it could so quickly be disposed of, he asked, *and who is my neighbor?* The word *neighbor* means literally *nigh-dweller.* Webster defines it first as "A person who lives near another; one whose abode is not far off," and then, giving the thirty-sixth verse of our lesson as an illustration, as "One entitled to, or exhibiting, neighborly kindness; hence, one of the human race; a fellow being." In Romans 13.8 we read, "He that loveth his neighbor has fulfilled the law," and the Greek words translated *his neighbor* are τον ἑτερον, *the other. The other* is a good definition for neighbor. To

teach the lawyer this meaning, Jesus told him the parable which we call the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

IV. THE STORY OF A GOOD NEIGHBOR, verses 30-37. *A certain man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho* (it was a distance of twenty miles and a descent of four thousand feet from one city to the other) fell into the hands of thieves who left him half dead. A priest and a Levite chanced to pass that way, but when they saw the wounded man, they *passed by on the other side.* Had he been a member of their own class they would have gone to his assistance, but he was only an unknown man who had no claim upon them. "This man's trouble was *impersonal* to them. They felt as a man feels who occupies a comfortable seat in a crowded street car when a strange woman enters—it is none of his affair. But if the woman be his neighbor—that is, if he knows her well—it is another matter. He surrenders his seat without hesitation" (Dr. Beck). "How can we justify that priest and Levite from our own experience? 'I have been away from home and must hurry back.' 'This is a dangerous place to stop to help a man.' 'He may be dying, anyway, and I would do no good.' 'No doubt it is his own fault.' 'Some one else will very likely look after him.' Have you ever let one of these excuses turn you from a neighbor into a selfish Pharisee? The Jericho road passes every door. We travel it every day. Do we help or do we pass by the need of men and women?" (Dr. Hough).

But a certain Samaritan, one whom Jews despised, came that way and was *moved with compassion* for the wounded man. "What kind of compassion is it which does *not move* a man? What kind of mainspring would it be in a watch which did not move the hands? What kind of steam would it be in a boiler which did not move the piston-rods? All the great emotions of the soul are 'motor powers.' You say you feel compassion? Well, why doesn't it drive your feet and hands? Compassion is a motor power or nothing. Don't say you are a kind man unless your kindness moves you" (Goss). The Samaritan's compassion moved him to bind up the man's *wounds,* put him *on his own beast* and bring him *to an inn* where he *took care of him* that night. Then *on the morrow* he gave the landlord *two shillings*—a sum sufficient to care for the man for several days—and also gave him what the French call a *carte blanche* order to care for the man at his expense. When James Gordon Bennett sent Henry M. Stanley to search for Livingstone he gave him a similar order: "Draw on me for one thousand pounds today to provide your equipment," he said, "and when that is exhausted draw on me for another thousand, and when that is gone, draw another thousand, and when that is gone, draw another; but find Livingstone."

Then came the question which brought out the purpose of the story: *Which of these three, thinkest thou,* O captious lawyer, *proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?* He would not name him, that Samaritan hater, he would merely indicate him, *He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.* The crowd that was present must have enjoyed witnessing the discomfiture of the lawyer, and must have realized, also, that they themselves had received a greatly needed lesson.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Thy neighbor, verse 27. As oriental houses are always either in villages or towns, the fact of neighborhood is of great social importance. All the Bible references to friends, neighbors, and sojourners apply to these relationships at the present day. The Oriental is never alone, and the most numerous and familiar class of proverbs is that which deals with the necessity of neighborhood, and all the advantages and disadvantages connected with it.

Its influence for good or evil is described in the maxims: "If you live forty days with people, you will then either leave them or become like them"; "We are your neighbors, and have learnt from you." To one about to build or rent a house, or go on a journey, the advice is given: "Consider the neighbor before the house, and the companion before the road." Identification of interest is taught in the words: "If it is well with your neighbor, it is well with you"; "He who cropped your neighbor will crop you"; and "A loaf more or less, but never let your neighbor want." The patience due to this relationship is stated in the proverb: "Your neighbor is your neighbor though he should act otherwise."—G. M. Mackie, in Bible Manners and Customs.

And who is my neighbor, verse 29. This was an oft-debated question among

the rabbis. To a Jew, only a Jew was really a "neighbor." "He excepts all Gentiles when he saith, 'his neighbor,'" said the rabbis. Said Maimonides: "The Gentiles, among whom and us there is no war, and so those that are keepers of sheep amongst the Israelites, and the like—we are not to contrive their death: but if they be in any danger of death, we are not bound to deliver them. If any of them fall into the sea, you shall not need to take them out; for it is said, Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor; but such a one is not thy neighbor."

A certain Samaritan, verse 33. "In our Lord's time to call a man 'a Samaritan' was as bad as to call him a demoniac," says Dr. Farrar. "Samaritans were regarded as excommunicated and accursed; they were denied all share in the resurrection; it was doubtful whether it was lawful to partake of any of the produce of their soil; to eat their bread was like eating the flesh of swine." A native of Jerusalem writes that a Jew of the present day will not occupy a seat on which a Samaritan has just sat, will not drink from a cup handled by a Samaritan, will not buy from or sell anything to a Samaritan, though he may employ him for a menial service.

Pouring on them oil and wine, verse 34. It is interesting to read that in the Chinese language the verb *to heal* is represented by two characters, the upper one meaning *to smite* or *wound with an arrow,* and the lower one meaning *wine* or *spirits,* which is poured upon the wound to heal it.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who were the ancestors of the Samaritans of Christ's day? What was the ground for the Jews' intense hatred of the Samaritans?

Situation of Samaria

Time and Place. In Luke the question of the lawyer and the Parable of the Good Samaritan follow the account of the return of the Seventy. See page 415.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

I am asked to say why I prefer the Twentieth Century New Testament to other versions. The reason is simple and easily stated—I understand it better.

Take, for example, the story of the Good Samaritan. When a boy I never thought that Samaritan made much of a sacrifice. He seemed to me to be in the thing for the fun of it, and he only left twopence at the inn. Silly as it may sound, this was one of the passages in the old version I misunderstood, or, worse still, did not understand at all, which robbed me of interest in the Bible, and led me to leave it unread upon the shelf. Yet, in later days, I have read these same passages from the Twentieth Century New Testament to audiences in both England and America, and have had doctors, lawyers, and college presidents of the most conservative type ask me what version I had used and where they could obtain a copy.—Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORLINESS

Beginning the Lesson. When a great Russian writer first came to live in the city, he spent hours at his window watching the people go by—the dingy people of a squalid quarter—and then he wrote: "It is a great thing, a wonderful thing, a thing to choke the breath and clutch the heart, this thing of living for the first time on the brink of a river of souls." To Jesus, first and last and always, the people whom he met were "rivers of souls." They seem always to have clutched his heart. He never passed indifferently by any one in need or distress. He was the supreme Example of the Good Samaritan.

Four Attitudes to the Brother. Under this heading Dr. J. E. McFadyen discusses our parable in his book entitled Jesus and Life.

I. The attitude of the robbers. To them the traveller was a victim to be exploited. They ask only, "What can I get out of this man?" Like them are shareholders whose only aim is dividends; employers, who pay the least they can get men to work for; workmen who want much pay for little work. We exploit each other, and thus leave a man wounded on the road.

II. The attitude of priest and Levite. To them the wounded man was a nuisance to be avoided. Here Jesus shows us how not to solve the social problem. Such men are still with us. They solved the problem of slavery by telling us that black people have not feelings like white people, and that negroes were happier as slaves. If poor people, they tell us, got higher wages, they would only spend them in drink. Anybody who tries to evade his responsibility for the "wounded traveller" is one of these "priests and Levites."

III. The attitude of the Inn-Keeper. To him the wounded man was but a business proposition.

IV. The attitude of the Samaritan. To him the wounded man was a neighbor to be healed. He solves the problem. He is busy, so he engages a professional to nurse the man; but he pays, he takes the first risks, his is the love and mercy and pity, and he promises to come again.

Be Generous Generously. When you have decided to do the right thing, do it finely, nobly, greatly. Have you decided to give? Then give graciously, spontaneously, with an open-handed, whole-hearted kindness which doubles all the value of your giving. Consider: Why are you helping this man at all? Why, to help him! Out of the goodness of your heart and out of a wish to be of service to him. Then how foolish to do it in such a way as to spoil his happiness in receiving! How foolish to defeat your own object by a way of doing things which brings you no gain and involves him in loss! There are men who have tried to do us a kindness, and they have set about it in such a fashion that we have not forgiven them yet! Give or do not give; one or the other. But if you are to be generous, be generous generously,—get all the credit, all the benefit, all the happiness, and all the influence for good out of it.—Charles F. Aked, in Christian Intelligencer.

Neighbors in Business. Five successive bad years in western Kansas had brought matters to a crisis. The farmers had no money, and the merchants were overstocked with unsalable agricultural machinery. Richard Ford, a dealer in farm implements, came home one night, and frankly told his wife that bankruptcy was inevitable.

"I am carrying forty thousand dollars' worth of bad accounts," he said. "The farmers have not the money. I cannot settle with the Chicago house, and it is pressing me for payment."

"Perhaps the Chicago dealer will give you more time," said his wife.

"He has extended the time beyond all reason already."

"Write and tell him, as brother to brother, just how matters are."

"What do you mean? There are no 'brothers' in business."

"How do you know? You have been dealing with the farmers in the Christian spirit. You have not charged them interest on their accounts. You have let them have seed-grain without payment. You have not taken advantage of their necessities. Are you the only Christian in business?"

Richard Ford was struck by this spirited reply, and the next day he wrote to the wholesale firm a frank statement of the conditions. He told of his own dealings with the farmers, of their complete inability to settle their accounts, of the universal lack of means throughout the country. Then he went on:

"As brother to brother, I can promise that if you can possibly extend my time another year, and we have the crop we may reasonably expect, I can and will make all payments with interest. The farmers in this community are honest men. They will pay just as soon as they have the money. My wife and I are living with the strictest economy; we want to pay our debts, not liquidate them in bankruptcy. It is for you to say whether you can afford to help us."

An answer came by return mail. "We appreciate your situation, and will extend your time—not simply as a business proposition, for it looks to us pretty uncertain that way, but simply as 'brother to brother.' We shall have to economize, as well as you, but we will do all we can to stand by you."

The next three years saw bumper crops in that part of the state. The farm-

ers paid Ford every dollar they owed him, and he paid his "brother" in Chicago in full, including a small amount of interest, which he insisted on adding. The Christian spirit is not absent even from the market-place.—The Youth's Companion.

One Way of Showing Neighborliness. The impulse to be neighborly manifests itself in accordance with the need for neighborliness. Where the need exists, the impulse usually arises. The difficulty is to keep the neighborly spirit alive and warm when there is no practical means of demonstrating it. Neighborhood gossip kills neighborliness. The good neighbor is one who, besides helping when he can, keeps locked in his breast the tart or bitter or unfriendly comments that people have confided to him; he will not himself speak unkindly even of those neighbors whom he does not like. He will be more interested in maintaining a spirit of harmony and coöperation in the community than in exhibiting the sharpness of his insight into human nature.

What is true of neighborliness among persons is true to some degree of neighborliness among nations. All the time the mechanical inventions of man are drawing the nations into a closer and closer neighborhood. The harmony of their neighborhood life will depend on the spirit of neighborliness that they show. If the people of one country persist in saying hard things about the people of another country, they are bad neighbors and may get themselves and every one else into serious trouble. Not to criticize or to censure, but to commend when we can and to help when we ought, should be our part if we are to be good neighbors, both in the smaller and in the larger neighborhood.—The Youth's Companion.

The Reflex of Environment. In a recent number of Harper's Magazine, a thoughtful and ingenious writer portrayed the character of a young man who mingled little with his neighbors and had small interest in their affairs. He was industrious and hard-working, and he had only contempt for slack tillage and for the people who practiced it. His corn crop was his pride, and by dint of careful selection he originated a new variety.

When some of the neighbors came to him to buy seed of the new variety, he refused to sell. In their poorly tended fields, he told himself, his superior strain of corn would soon degenerate and be hardly better than their own. But, oddly enough, this very thing happened in his own field a season or two later. Part of his crop was inferior because of cross-fertilization with his neighbor's poor corn, and it dawned upon the young man that his self-centered life was impracticable. "I can't have good corn while their corn is poor," he told his mother.

The principle holds true of things vastly more important than field crops. No man can be so secure in his own prosperity and happiness as to ignore the character and condition of the people round him. Years ago a wealthy free-thinker refused to contribute to the support of the only church in the little village where he lived. It meant nothing to him that its doors were closed. He had lived an honest, moral life without the help of the church and he continued to do so. But the moral tone of the community suffered, and ultimately his favorite daughter eloped with a worthless fellow, the by-product of two decades of godless surroundings, and his only son was drawn into the company of several dissipated young men, and soon outstripped them all in mad excesses.

The attempt to live wholly for self is illogical. Human life is so complicated, and tiny streamlets of influence appear at such unexpected places and in such unsuspected ways, that the character and well-being of our neighbors are almost as vital to our own interests as the sort of life we live ourselves.—The Youth's Companion.

Are There Two Standards of Ethics, One for the Individual and Another for the Nation? It is taken for granted that the common virtues of humanity, sympathy and neighborliness are obligatory. To what extent is there the same standard of conduct for nations and for classes? Is there one ethic for people as units in the social order, and another for them collectively? That is the question which the post-war period has forced upon the world in a most urgent manner. The man who deals with his fellows in a selfish, unneighborly way wins for himself only dis-esteem and contempt. Has a nation, particularly one dowered with all the advantages of wealth and unimpaired resources, the right to isolate itself from the sufferings of the world, whether they be physical or moral sufferings? To ask the question is to answer it. The nation has the

same obligations to friendliness and solicitude regarding its weaker sisters that the individual has toward his neighbors. That is both good ethics and common sense Christianity.—The Christian Century.

America, the Good Samaritan. "Did not America play the part of the Good Samaritan during the World War? Have not Americans been Good Samaritans to prostrate Europe ever since? Have they not aided those who were largely of a different race, language and religion from their own? America poured her treasures in abundance into the lap of Europe. She sent cargo after cargo of provisions in continuous succession to her suffering and starving people. At this moment, according to information furnished me by Herbert Hoover, America is daily supplying one or two meals to more than three million children of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. All this she has done without demanding or expecting compensation. The only remuneration she has is the testimony of a good conscience and the sense of complacency in the example of disinterested patriotism which she has exhibited to the nations of the world."

The above is from the last New Year's sermon delivered in Baltimore by Cardinal Gibbons. A writer in The Outlook does not see disinterestedness in all of America's Good Samaritan acts. "I can remember that, even as a child," he writes, "it used to seem curious to me to go to a Sunday-school entertainment given for the heathen, and pay ten cents for a dish of ice-cream, satisfying my little inner man—over-eat, in fact—and realize that perhaps only two cents went for the benefit of my unseen and unknown brethren. Grown older, I see that so much giving is based on that principle. We hear of some need in the world: and immediately a bazaar or a fête is planned, in the high name of goodness and charity. We seldom give unless we get something in return. I was struck with this when I learned of a fete given at a great hotel for the benefit of the orphans of the Great War. One woman went in a magnificent costume that cost upward of ten thousand dollars—and ten dollars from her purse went to the orphans! No, less than that; for there were certain necessary expenses connected with the enterprise."

For Discussion. 1. A keen, warm sympathy that makes your brother's need your own—nothing short of that is really charity.—Phillips Brooks.

2. "There would be more Good Samaritans if it did not mean oil and twopence."

3. Neighbors' Day: see The Outlook for May 26, 1920. A modern city's Jericho road: see The Congregationalist, October 28, 1920. Know your neighbor: see The Christian Herald, September 11, 1920.

4. Tales of spurious and authentic woe. See The Outlook for January 19, 1921.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Did Martha err in motive? 2. What were her mistakes? 3. How was Jesus's treatment of Martha and of the Pharisee alike? 4. How were they different? 5. Why was Jesus so severe in his denunciation of the Pharisees? 6. Was Jesus's treatment of the Pharisee in accord with his teaching that one should turn the other cheek? 7. Whose enemies will you convert by patience and kindness? 8. Whose enemies will you chastise with severity? Why? 9. Which principle shall we apply to the enemies of our country? 10. Can we justify the forcing of indemnity payments from Germany while many of her children were starving, and the feeding of those starving children by voluntary contributions from this country?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Beginning the Lesson. Recently I saw a series of interesting pictures. In the first a dog and a cat were in friendly converse: was there anything unusual there? In the second picture the cat was on the edge of a muddy street and calling for help: why did she not cross? Many heard but no one heeded her. Then in the third picture her racial enemy the dog had come and understood and answered. He carried her across. (A French girl succoring a wounded German soldier may illustrate a similar story.)

Who will tell us the Parable of the Good Samaritan? How did the Jews regard the Samaritans, and the Samaritans the Jews? Did the Samaritan deserve

more credit for helping a Jew than he would had the wounded man been another Samaritan? Is it harder to be helpful toward people of another race or class? How does the series of pictures of which we have just spoken illustrate the parable? How does the parable answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

Prejudice and Neighborliness. An interesting story comes from Washington, D. C. A young woman in one of the many rooming-houses fell and sprained her ankle. The next day a colored woman, employed in the house as a cleaner, brought to the housekeeper a custard for the injured girl, saying: "Here's something for that child to eat. I'm real sorry for her *ef she is white.*" The inference was not good, but the colored woman was!

During the days of the I. W. W. trials in California, a welfare worker became much excited over tales that the prisoners were being starved in the jails. She called up a man prominent for his philanthropies and said to him, "They say that even the food brought by their friends is allowed to spoil while they suffer hunger." "Madam," said the benevolent gentleman, "I disapprove of the I. W. W.," and he cut off the phone. The welfare worker looked about her with a dazed countenance. "Why, so do I," said she; "what has that to do with it?"

The cultured Jews of a city frequently do acts of neighborliness that might well be repaid, not to them, but to their less agreeable compatriots.

Three Special Points for You. "The priest and Levite passed by on the other side. When we have secured a good seat on the street car, and the crowd begins to pile in, we bury our noses and eyes in the evening paper, and don't see the poor tired sewing-woman and shop-girls. Oh, no! We just 'pass by on the other side.'

"The Good Samaritan set the wounded man on his own beast. It is a very great mark of good will to let another fellow ride your horse. He might have ridden his own and hired another for the poor sick man. But he just dismounted, and lifted up the wounded traveller, and set him on his own beast. And do you know that it is just as fine a mark of generosity in a boy to let one of his friends try his own new skates, or shoot his own new gun, or ride his own new bicycle? It is easy enough to lend your brother's, but your own—dear me, that comes very hard!"

When Dr. Grenfell was about to start on his first trip to Labrador, thirty years ago, a friend asked him what deep religious emotion enabled him to face the sacrifices and discomforts of such a journey. "I have not considered the question of hardships at all," the Doctor replied. "I have no lofty motives. I have always believed that the Good Samaritan went across the road to the wounded man just because he wanted to. I don't believe he felt any sacrifice or sense of fear."

All He Has Left. "The winter I was sixteen," an elderly lawyer said recently, "I joined our home church at the spring communion by profession of faith in Christ. Probably I didn't realize fully the import of the step I was taking, but I think I was genuinely in earnest, and I sincerely tried to live as a Christian should.

"One blustery January afternoon, when I had been a church member several months, Deacon Crandall stopped me on the road. There had been a number of fine catches of fish through the ice, and Joe Stickney and I had our tackles and our supply of bait all ready for an early start.

" 'I've just been over to Jake Streever's,' the deacon said. 'The folks are all sick, and the woman and Mis' Adams wanted to send over some things. There wa'n't no fire in the house to speak of, Robert, and there ain't a stick of wood in the shed; so I'm going to change the team on to the heavy sleigh soon's I get home and draw 'em a load of four-foot, and enough stove length to last 'em over-night. You're a young, husky fellow, Robert; why can't you play the good Samaritan and saw up what I draw down first thing in the mornin'?'

" 'Joe Stickney and I plan to go fishing tomorrow,' I replied. 'I see,' the deacon said mildly. 'I didn't know that; I thought it'd be a good chance for you.' He kept looking at me with his sober, kindly eyes. 'The way it comes to me is that you and me and the rest of us are all the Lord Jesus has left to tell other folks what a good, kind, self-denyin' Savior he was. If there wa'n't no Christians tryin' to live up to their high callin', Robert, there wouldn't be a whisper for the Lord—not a whisper—this side of heaven. That's why I thought mebbe you'd prize the chance and be glad to take it.'

"I told him on the spur of the moment that I would give up my fishing trip

and saw the wood, and I believe I never did any bit of hard work with more genuine satisfaction. I learned that day what real service was, and since then, whenever I have been tempted to shirk my Christian obligations, Deacon Crandall's homely aphorism has rebuked me—'We're all the Lord Jesus has left.' What words can express better the very core and essence of Christian discipleship? We're all he has left."—The Youth's Companion.

A Fine Spirit. "Well, I'm the next Mayor of Pinnacle, Anna," said Mr. James Ropes.

"Good!" said his wife. "I didn't expect it. The city is normally Democratic."

"Do you know," said her husband, "who won the election for me? Nobody but our Herbert."

"Herbert is fifteen, James," said Mrs. Ropes. "He isn't in politics yet."

"This is what happened," said Mr. Ropes. "One hundred and thirty-two men, Irish and Italian mill hands, came up from North Pinnacle and voted the Republican ticket in a body. And it gave me a majority. As soon as I heard about it I drove down there to investigate. To tell you the truth, I was afraid Griffin had put me in for a scandal by buying votes. I had no interest with the mill hands at North Pinnacle. I looked up the foreman—a big, jolly Irishman,—and asked him about it, and he said it was on account of my son. It seems that when I told Herbert he could have that field for his school athletics and I would fix it up for them, a bunch of what you might call aristocrats in the high school proposed to form a society to use the field—a kind of frat—and admit no dagoes or Micks. And Herbert told them if that was the game they couldn't have the field. He said I had given the field to him, and that several of the 'Micks' and 'dagoes' were his friends and friends of mine—caddies, you see—and if they and their chums weren't to be in it, it was off with the field. So it was made a high school—indeed, a community-field, for St. Bridget boys play there, as you know. I knew nothing about it, but every blessed voter in North Pinnacle knew. And they voted accordingly. The foreman said, 'We know our friends, Mr. Mayor. It's a fine boy you have.'"

"Well, it is," said his wife.

The Missionary Adventure is just Neighborliness. The man who growled that he did not believe in missions as it was enough for him to be kind to his neighbors, was well rebuked by being questioned whether the man whose land adjoined his was not his neighbor. When he replied, "Yes," the second question was how far his land went down. He supposed it went half-way through the earth. "Then you are neighbor to the man on the other side," was the triumphant response, "for his land comes half-way through, too, and your land meets his in the middle!"

We must neighbor weakness and neighbor suffering, remembering that our Lord, though he is in heaven, is still Neighbor to all the earth, and ready to be Savior and Friend.—W. Y. Fullerton.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. He who thinks he cannot learn to love his neighbor as himself needs to learn to love himself less.—The Youth's Companion.

There is no thoroughfare to the love of God except through the love of man.—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The Everlasting Mercy teaches us to neighbor every soul on earth.—John Masefield.

It is a great thing given by God to be in a position to do good to others.—Cyprian.

Every kindness done to others is a step nearer to the life of Christ.—Dean Stanley.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XI. A Lesson Jesus gave about Neighborliness.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was the home of Martha and Mary? 2. What does *cumbered* mean? 3. Why did Martha complain? 4. What did Jesus's rebuke mean? 5. Did Jesus have many friends? 6. How did they help him? 7. Where in Matthew are verses 42-44 found? 8. For what sins did Jesus rebuke the Pharisees? 9. What did a certain Pharisee boast about his tithes? 10. What words show that the Pharisees attached great importance to trifles and disregarded essentials?

JESUS AMONG FRIENDS AND FOES

Golden Text

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. John 15.14

LESSON Luke 10.38 to 11.54 DEVOTIONAL READING John 15.8-16

REFERENCE MATERIAL Luke 2.34, 35

LUKE 10.38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: 42 but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

11.42 But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the market-places. 44 Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* know it not.

53 And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; 54 laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JESUS AT THE HOME OF HIS FRIENDS, 10.38-42. On one of his visits to Jerusalem Jesus went to the home of his three friends at Bethany, Martha and Mary and Lazarus. The two sisters received him in different ways: Martha hastened to prepare food for him; Mary *sat at his feet and heard his word.*

> When he who, sad and weary, longing sore
> For love's sweet service, sought the sisters' door,
> One saw the heavenly, one the human Guest;
> But who shall say which loved the Master best?—Whittier.

Martha was *cumbered,* literally, *distracted, about much serving:* she wished to honor her Guest with many courses, and in her irritation she came to Jesus and complained because Mary was not helping her. *Martha, Martha*—thus gently Jesus reproved her, *thou art anxious and troubled about many things* while *only one thing is needful.* It is characteristic of Jesus's method that he does not say what the one thing is, but he points to Mary. "Look at Mary, and you will see the one thing needful. There it is! or rather, There she is! for Mary is that thing incarnate. Sitting at the Master's feet, and hanging wistfully upon his every word, she is an immortal illustration of the truth which Jesus would bring home to the restless Martha, and to all those eager, strenuous spirits of which Martha is the type" (McFadyen). "'Not yours in bustling about, Martha, but hers is the good part of ministering, not to my body's but my spirit's need for sympathy and understanding. It will not be taken from her now by my bidding her help you, and it is of such a character that she will never lose it.' Probably Jesus found Mary ready to listen when he spoke of his coming Passion—as the disciples were not" (Garvie).

II. JESUS AMONG HIS ENEMIES, 11.42-44, 53. *Woe unto you Pharisees!* "From the gentleness to the severity of Jesus seems a difficult transition. Are they consistent in the same character? Or are they contradictory? The answer lies in a study of the circumstances. It was the censorious and bigoted Pharisees against whom Jesus used some of the severest words ever spoken by human

lips. To show tenderness for all sinning, suffering, responsive souls, and severity towards all formal, bigoted, unloving souls—this is the right way in which to be both kind and severe. Our modern life needs the restoration of such convictions and affections as will make it capable of sterner antagonisms than it is now. We need to love the good more, in order that we may have a stronger hatred of evil" (Davis). Woe unto you—*for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God.* The Pharisees attached great importance to trifles, they were scrupulously exact in giving the tenth even of the common herbs that grew in their gardens, but they neglected the essentials, they cared not about justice and the love of God. Seemingly Jesus had in mind the great saying of Micah 6.8. *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* Observe how careful Jesus was to avoid the pitfalls laid by the Pharisees (verses 53, 54). A second woe Jesus pronounced upon the Pharisees, accusing them of loving *the chief seats in the synagogues* (the semicircular bench around the ark and facing the congregation) and *the salutations in the marketplaces* ("which probably expressed profound respect for their supposed sanctity"). And yet a third woe he pronounced, declaring that they were *as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.* "Contact with sepulchers defiled, so the Jews smeared them with limewash yearly on the fifteenth of Adar lest travelers touching them unawares should be made unclean. Jesus compares the Pharisees to unwashed (and therefore not seen) sepulchers because they defiled those who came into close contact with them" (Dummelow).

"When Jesus, by association of ideas, went on to castigate the scribes, who not only added to the burdens of men but also exhibited the homicidal temper of their fathers, who had slain the prophets, a lawyer remonstrated at the fiery philippic against his class. It was not that Jesus resented their hostility to himself as an individual, but in his Person they opposed the Kingdom of God and all the humanities. Such denunciations reveal the vehemence and stress of the conflict; it had reached a stage at which it could no longer be concealed by suave speeches. His words fanned the flame of hate against him, and henceforth the scribes and Pharisees lay in wait for him as men that sought to entrap a wild beast" (Grist).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Martha was cumbered about much serving, 10.40. Once in my touring I came, about the middle of the forenoon, to a family of believers quite isolated; and I was glad to be able to spend a couple of hours with them and continue my journey after dinner. It was a rare opportunity for them, and I was eager to improve it; but I was left to sit alone in idleness while they prepared an elaborate dinner. They meant well; it was a rare thing to have a visit from a missionary, and they wanted to make the most of it. But they did not take the best way; and it was trying to me. However, I got new light on Mary and Martha. It was the opportunity of a life-time thus to have Christ in their home and to themselves for a few precious hours; and John has shown us what gems of truth Christ was wont to communicate in private conversation. It is one of those inimitable evidences of the truthfulness of Luke and John that they thus illuminate each other.—Dr. Walker of China, quoted by Dr. Ozora S. Davis.

Ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, 11.42. In the time of Hyrcanus a commission was appointed to inquire throughout the land how the law of religious contributions was observed by the people. The result showed that while the priestly "heave-offerings" were regularly given, neither the first or Levitical tithe, nor yet the so-called second or "poor's tithe" was paid. Then the following arrangement was made. All that the "country people" sold was to be considered "demai"—the buyer had to regard the "heave-offering" and the "poor's tithe" as still due on what was purchased. But the Pharisees formed a "Chabura," or fraternity, each member (Chabu) of which bound himself to pay these tithes before use or sale: his produce was freely bought and sold by the rest of the "Chabura." Of course the burden of additional expense which this involved to each non-"chabu" was very great, since he had to pay the heave-offering and the tithe on all that was purchased or used, while the Pharisee who bought from another Pharisee was free.—Edersheim.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Time and Place. Bethany was on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, and it may have been that association of ideas led Luke to record this incident in the Bethany home after he gave the parable in which a man going down to Jericho fell among thieves.

Between the two parts of our lesson many sayings of Jesus are recorded: his giving of the model prayer and his words encouraging one to pray; the refutation of the calumny of the Jews; the rebuking of the craving for signs.

It was at a dinner in the house of a Pharisee to which Jesus was invited that the woes of verses 42-44 were uttered. The place and the date we do not know. Most of the words here recorded are given by Matthew in chapter 23, in Jesus's last denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, but without the occasion for the utterance which Luke mentions. No doubt Jesus was forced to repeat such charges more than once. The denunciation of verses 42-51 may have been added here by Luke while on the subject of Jesus's condemnation of the Pharisees, and yet have been uttered by Jesus, not while he was being entertained by a Pharisee, but after open hostility had been declared.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

"What a brave companion we have got," said Faithful to Christian concerning Talkative. But Christian knew Talkative better. "His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savor," said Christian; "men that have had any dealings with him say it is better to deal with a Turk than with him."

Woe unto Talkative, Woe unto scribe or Pharisee or teacher who teaches but does not practice what he teaches! Jesus hated hypocrisy, or sham, of every sort. He lived what he taught. His life is the best illustration we can find of every principle of living which he uttered.

"If you want me to weep, there must be tears in your own eyes. If you want me to believe, you yourself must be aflame with conviction which has penetrated to the very marrow of your bones," declares a great religious teacher. "And so, I take it, the first requisition for power with others is that we shall have this unvarying firmness of grasp of clearly apprehended truths, and unflinching boldness of devotion to them."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE GENTLENESS AND SEVERITY OF JESUS.

Beginning the Lesson. A visitor is shown into the reception-room and no farther. A friend calls and is shown "right in," as we say; he takes us as we are, as he finds us, and we have no uncomfortable feeling about asking him to sit down with us to the plainest of fare. Now, I believe the great mistake Martha made that day when Jesus looked in upon that Bethany home, was just this—that she treated him as a Visitor rather than as a Friend. The great thing that Mary did that day was to take him for what he was. To me the supreme lesson of this incident is to learn the simple but profound fact that Jesus our Lord longs to be regarded by his own, not as the visitor, coming now and again to them, but as a Friend who desires their company above everything else in the world.—D. Ewart James.

A Brief for Mary. Without following the pros and cons in the time-worn controversy between Martha and Mary, let me note just one thing. *Mary takes no part in it.* She is silent all through, though I dare say she had a good enough case to put had she been so minded. But minded she is not. She was never much minded to speak. We have just one sentence from her in all the Gospels, and yet we have a perfect portrait. She was the woman of quiet, and if there is one place more than another where she will be quiet, it is *under provocation.*

A great gift, and specially to be commended in a woman. For women have a clever tongue, and often a sharp one. "Woman has always the last word," says the proverb. She might, but I doubt if she has. At least I have known more women than men who were silent in provocation. Their quarrel was just. They suffered wrongly. But they were silent. The word that quivered in the heart was not allowed to pass the lips. It is a great gift. It was the gift of the Master himself. As a sheep dumb before her shearers, so he opened

not his mouth. "The chief priests accused him of many things, but he answered nothing."—W. Mackintosh Mackay in The Woman of Tact.

Conflicting Duties. Martha was not criticizing Mary for enjoying a place at Jesus's feet. Martha wanted a similar place for herself. It was conflict of duties that made Martha fretful that day. With such a Guest in her home, the dinner must be of the best. Yet with such a Guest in the home there was so much besides dinner to think of. Hence Martha's reproach of her sister. Everybody knows what Jesus said in reply. Then, let everybody remember that, as between the two sisters, the Scripture names first our Lord's love for Martha, "And Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary." And let nobody ever again forget that the warning which Jesus sounded to Martha, because he loved Martha, is everlastingly valid. There are human needs more imperious than hunger, crying as that need is.—Dr. George Clarke Peck, in The Method of the Master.

The Truth of the Whole Matter. Thank God for the Marthas, and thank God for the Marys. The world needs them both,—needs more of each of them. Let them try to understand each other. The perfect woman would be a blend of Martha and Mary, but the blend is rare, though by no means unknown. We want the practical woman, the expert home-maker, and we want the seraphic woman with the vision that peers into the eternal, and sees the Savior as clearly, and hears his voice as distinctly, as she sees and hears the face and the voice of any member of the immediate circle in which she lives and moves. Jesus loved Martha and Mary, and Marthas and Marys in all the generations have loved Jesus. She who is cumbered with serving will be all the better if sometimes she sits at his feet, and perhaps it would not harm Mary if occasionally she humored Martha by helping her in the house and sharing her little worries.—Editor of The Christian World Pulpit.

Martha in the Church. Those who know Stephen Graham's books on Russia will remember The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary. The Russians are a very religious people and this book is really a study of Russian religion. The author calls the Russian type of religion the way of Mary. By contrast, our type of religion is the way of Martha. Martha was a busy, bustling type of woman. The author has hit us off pretty well. There never was a time when the church was so busy and engaged in such multifarious enterprises. We are living in a very restless, hurrying age. Our forefathers were content with leisurely methods, whereas we live at full pressure and top speed. The same spirit is in the Christian church. What would the old minister think if he could now see the church of which he was minister eighty or ninety years ago? In our father's time the services of the church consisted of two services on Sunday and Sunday-school, and a prayer-meeting and a week night service. There are still the double services on Sunday (though many people do not attend twice) and the Sunday-school. He would not find many prayer-meetings, and in some cases he would not find the week night service, but he would find all sorts of additional things, and that the doors of his church and school were open every night in the week—a very different church from the church he left.

It is high time it is understood that the church does not exist for itself—that Christ came not simply to save the individual soul, but to establish the kingdom of God. For the past twenty-five or fifty years we have followed the way of Martha; but while on the whole it has been a healthy development, it has certainly not been without its perils.

The days coming are the church's opportunity—such an opportunity as there has not been for many years—and in order to make it equal to the opportunity, the church must practise more the way of Mary—sit at the Lord's feet and cultivate a receptive spirit and seek at the Lord's hands an increase of spiritual power.—From a Report in The Christian Work, of a Sermon by Dr. J. D. Jones.

Christ's Methods of Dealing with People. Mentally, Martha was like the Pharisees—she could not see the woods for the trees. Her intentions were righteous, but she substituted details of service for communion of soul, and thus lost "the good part." Christ ever consistently taught that the life is more than food, and the body than raiment. The Pharisees also substituted forms, ceremonies, details, symbols, for the realities which they should have represented. They tithed, but they passed over justice and the love of God.

And Jesus rebuked both. Martha was one of Christ's friends, and the Pharisees were his enemies. You and I excuse things in our friends which we condemn in our enemies. Christ did not. He did not call down woe upon Martha, but he did gently rebuke her. He rebuked Martha and the Pharisees very differently, however. He looked at the will back of Martha's words and knew that she was true at heart. He looked at the will back of the Pharisees' deeds and words and knew them to be false through and through.

With Christ it was ever a question of the will, and therein lies the principle of his differentiation in the treatment of sinners. With the poor, weak sinners, the men and women guilty of the coarse sins of gluttony and wine bibbing, the publicans and harlots, he was strangely gentle, while toward the self-sufficient, self-righteous hypocrites, the high churchmen who tithed trifles and passed over all that most mattered in the moral life, he was strangely stern—strangely so only from our faulty point of view. For we find it difficult to draw the line between those who have faults but mean well and those who carry out the details of the law but mean ill. The "Gentle Jesus" of our hymns must not usurp the true portrait in the Gospels of a Perfect Character, as a forceful writer wisely warns us. There is always a capacity for fierce anger in a perfectly developed soul. Sympathy must never be cultivated at the expense of principle. Young people need to guard against mistaken judgments due to intolerance, but older people need to guard against making concessions to sin under the guise of being tolerant to weakness.

Simeon (Lk. 2.34, 35) presages this day. Outspoken rebuke, like that of Jesus to the Pharisees, is likely to split any community into two camps and to bring about "the falling and the rising of many," and to reveal the "thoughts out of many hearts." There can be no doubt that the community was sharply divided over these words of Jesus.

Jesus as a Friend. His love for man is made intense and personal by his love for Martha and Mary and Lazarus. As we study his relations in that Bethany home, we see Jesus as the tender Friend, when he rebuked the anxious worriment of Martha. Next we see him as the sympathetic Friend, when in the hour of their great affliction he came to them and mingled his tears with theirs at the grave of Lazarus. Third, we behold him as the Divine Friend, when with the voice of Divine authority he declared himself the resurrection and the life and commanded Lazarus to come forth. Fourth, we behold him as the grateful Friend, when with imperishable words of gratitude he acknowledged Mary's act of devotion in breaking over him the precious spikenard.

Combine these qualities—tenderness, sympathy, gratitude, and Divine helpfulness—and they reveal the intense and beautiful humanness of Jesus's relations with those he loved.—Dr. Donald Sage Mackay.

Friendship with Christ. "Friendship is a plant that we must water often." It must not be allowed to take its chance. Human friendships have to be tended, for there is no fair thing in the world which can thrive in an atmosphere of neglect. And therefore we must carefully attend to our friendship with the Lord.

And as for the Master's side of the friendship, it cannot be put into words. "He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He loves to make friends of the failure, the bruised, the unfortunate, and him that hath no helper. And he wants to befriend thee and me today, in all our sins, in all our sorrows, in all our worries, in all the manifold changes of the ever-changing day.

His friendship transforms every road. Every road unveils spiritual wonders when he walks with us, and blessings abound on every side. The very consciousness of his presence begets a peace which is itself the medium of discernment, and we are able, on the most ordinary road, to know some of "the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in Things that Matter Most.

Rebuked by the Tenderness of Jesus. The following lines were written by Marion Warner Wildman on seeing in a junk-shop window Hofmann's picture of Christ.

I walked today, along a city street
So squalid, so unclean, my whole soul shrank,
Revolted, from foul sights and odors rank.
Naught could I see in those I chanced to meet
Save hard or sodden faces, shambling feet,

Eyes bleared with vice and liquor. My soul drank
The lees of loathing. Then it was—I thank
Who willed it!—that a Face, austere and sweet
And strong and pure had stopped me, like a hand
Laid gently on me. O'er that thoroughfare
Of wretchedness and sin they looked, those eyes
Of One who was too tender to despise
The least, or of the lowest to despair.
Rebuked, I passed. The Christ must understand.

The Fearlessness of Jesus. Jesus exhibited all that is meant by moral courage, whether in word or conduct. He said just what he meant before everybody, and never compromised his purpose. Besides telling the Pharisees what he thought of them, calling them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, devourers of widows' houses, and ridiculing their petty rites and distinctions, he faced his people's prejudices and dispelled their hopes and pretensions of superiority. He told the proud Nicodemus that he must be born again; the rich young man that he must sell his goods and give to the poor; the disciples who were aspiring for the high places in his new kingdom that they must seek to serve rather than to be served; and the scribe who wanted to follow him that while the foxes have holes and the birds nests, he had no place to lay his head. He kept his mind and the minds of his hearers with steady persistency on the one object in view, and never varied his utterances for policy or convenience. He raised no false hopes, and made no misleading promises, but he dared to present the exact issue and wait till his purpose should prevail. Bold, persistent, uncompromising, he is the highest model for the leader, the reformer, the statesman, and anyone having a great work to do, or great numbers to control.—Austin Bierbower, in The Biblical World.

A Lesson from Botany. Observers remind us that in the English hedgerows grow two kinds of dog-rose. The white one which is comparatively dull, and being scentless is hardly a rose at all; it is nearly thornless. The pink dog-rose is far more attractive, and truly rose-like; its delicate color is beyond that of the apple-blossom, and its fragrance rare and delightful. The adage that no rose is without its thorn seems true in an intensive degree, for the rosier of the two common roses is armed with tiger-like talons unknown to the more degenerate species. Does not this fact of botany represent a truth of character? As the gayest bloom of the wayside protects itself by formidable brambles, so rare character demonstrates itself in an emphasis and a courage that make it respected.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul.

Why We Should Expose Guilt. Tearing away the garment that cloaks a sin sometimes arouses the guilty to reform. More often it arouses the community to purge itself. Read the newspapers in proof of this.

A church that owned houses and lands held its services every Sunday in all sincerity, but a local newspaper exposed the fact that the business men who attended to the finances of the church were charging exorbitant rents for unhealthful tenements. The church people were aghast, and there was a quick reformation in its dealings.

Re-read Dickens's Oliver Twist to note how the novelist worked for the reformation of the poorhouses of England.

For Discussion. 1. "One of the benefits of friendship is to have the advantage of the candid criticism of an *alter ego*."

2. The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary, Stephen Graham's book.

3. Why Jesus denounced the Pharisees. Hyprocisy (Mt. 6.2, 5, 16; 15.7; 22.18; 23.13, 15, 23, 26, 27, 29); self-righteousness (Lk. 14.7-11; 18.9-14); spiritual blindness (Mt. 23.17, 19, 24, 26; Lk. 11.35); greed (Mk. 7.11); bigotry (Mt. 23.13, 19); closing the door of the kingdom to others (Mt. 23.13-28; Mk. 7.1-23).

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Wherein lay the folly of the man in the parable? 2. How can we fight covetousness? 3. What does Isaiah say about the sin of avarice? (Isa. 5.8-10). 4. What does Jesus say about a man who is absorbed in riches? (Jas. 5.1-6). 5. What does Jesus mean by "the deceitfulness of riches," Mt. 13.22? What does he say is its effect? 6. Why is the use of money spoken of as "the acid test" of our Christian character? 7. Has your increase in prosperity changed

in any way your attitude toward your fellow men? 8. What is it that Jesus commends in the ravens? 9. How does he show the futility of worry? 10. How is the promise in the last verse to be understood?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JESUS MAKES FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus had friends, many friends, and friends everywhere. They were to be found in the palace (Joanna was the wife of Herod's Steward), among the Pharisees and rulers (Nicodemus was a Pharisee), as well as in humble homes and in the crowds. Jesus had enemies, too, and they also were numerous and were to be found in every class. That he had friends and enemies proves that he was a Man of strong, capable, vigorous life. Suppose he had been a man without any belief, convictions, and will, one who took no interest in things or men, would he have had friends or enemies? People would have found in him nothing to love and nothing to hate.

Helps and Perils. Both friends and enemies are helps in life. Christ's friends were good to him; they made his life easier and happier. What did Joanna and Susanna and Mary do for him, as we learned a few Sundays ago? It was a home of rest and love which two sisters, Martha and Mary, made for him at Bethany. And the disciples cheered him and saved him from being lonely. That Jesus valued their help we know because he took three of them with him in the great hours of his life. Life would not have been the same to Jesus without these friends of his. One of the best things life has for any one of us is a true friend. The fact that somebody cares, helps at all times, and gives especial strength and cheer in times of struggle and trouble.

But how were Christ's enemies a help? They inspired some of his finest sayings and sermons. They brought out the loyalty and devotion of his friends, and they revealed his patience, his greatness of heart, his courage, his fidelity to God and to his mission. We are also indebted to them for some of the best testimony ever given. It was his enemies who said that the whole world had gone after him, that he was the Friend of publicans and sinners.

Christ's friends and enemies were also perils in his life. His enemies tried to silence him, sought to damage his reputation, called him a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, strove to stop his work, to make the people reject him. They threatened his reputation, mission, ministry and person. He had to be ever on the watch against them. But how could his friends be a peril to him? Peter tried to turn him aside from his purpose to die for men. If the disciples had had their way, the little children would have been sent away. They would have had him destroy a whole village with fire from heaven. They tried to stop him from going into Judea because of the danger awaiting him. They tried to persuade him not to offend the Pharisees. How did Christ escape the peril? By being true to the Heavenly Father.

Martha as a Friend of Jesus. See Text Explained and preceding topic. Have read in class Part IX, At Bethany, Second Passover, of Longfellow's Divine Tragedy.

The Pharisees, the Enemies of Jesus, were Hypocrites. What is a hypocrite? "Uncle Tom went motoring Sunday morning instead of going to church," said his niece. "I don't mind. But he went out of town by the short cut and avoided Main Street because he didn't want to be seen doing it." "Your uncle," said her mother, "went over the mountain to see if he could get a farm for the Giles family who are having their house sold over their heads by a gentleman who did go to church this morning. Uncle Tom is not a hypocrite; he is only a little sensitive to public opinion."

The Pharisees were not like Uncle Tom. Jesus himself called them hypocrites. Ye are as the tombs which appear not, he cried: what did he mean by that?

"Wolves in sheep's clothing," "whited sepulchers," he called them. His most scathing words were uttered against hypocrisy. Try to ring true, like a genuine coin. You have seen a counterfeit coin flung upon a table and have heard it fall with a dull, leaden sound. And you have heard a clear, sharp sound as a coin of true metal fell. Try to ring true, like a genuine coin.

The World is Full of Sham. "Hands off," was the sign over a case of magnificent bound books in the British building at the Columbian exposition. Several young women stopped for a moment to read the titles, and one, in

spite of the printed injunction, put out her hand to draw forth a volume. To the surprise of all, a block of wood fell into her fingers. "Shame on you, England," she exclaimed aloud; "there was no necessity for your bookcases here, and to think that you have them filled with painted shams. Shakespeare and Bacon and Thackeray would despise such empty compliments."

As the girls went out in couples, one pressed the arm of another with a light laugh. "Bravo for Marie and her avowed hatred of shams. Was sincerity her strong point at college?" "We used to envy her her very name," returned her companion, "until her mother came and called her Maria; we were led to believe her the youngest girl in the class until she inadvertently mentioned some memories of the Centennial; she laughed at our plain note-paper until we discovered that she had hers engraved at a stationer's with a leftover crest; and her sealskin jacket turned out to be plush. Shame on you, Marie," and the roguish girl copied the air of the earlier speaker, "there was no necessity for anything nicer than a plush jacket, and to think you set us all agog with envy!"

More famous persons than foolish Marie have succumbed to the fleeting honors of hypocrisy. Macaulay wrote a letter to his constituents dated Windsor Castle. He happened to be there a half-hour, and took that opportunity to write the letter, or rather to date it, for he carried it with him ready written. It has been thrown up to him ever since. A famous Italian character possessed a number of wigs of different lengths, which he wore in rotation in order to sustain the impression that his hair was cut from time to time.

It was the fashion of the ancients when an ox was led out to sacrifices, to chalk the dark spots so the animal might seem to be of unblemished whiteness. Let us fling away the chalk, and shake ourselves free from shams. Pretending to be a little wiser, a little richer, a little more beautiful, a little more aristocratic than we really are, degrades us in our own eyes and makes us a laughing stock to others.—Lucy Elliot Keeler, in If I Were Young Again.

Woe unto you Pharisees, for ye Love the Chief Seats in the Synagogues. Some years ago a crowd of people stood in the vestibule of a large church, waiting to be seated. Those who were well dressed and prosperous-looking were placed by a young usher in the front pews, but one old man, wrapped in a shabby cloak, was left standing until all the others were seated and the service had begun. Then the usher beckoned the old gentleman to an empty seat at the back, not even troubling to open the pew door for him. When the service was over the usher was startled at hearing someone exclaim, "Why there is General Sherman!" and man after man advanced to shake hands with the old soldier in the worn military cloak. Then of course the usher was mortified, but wasn't his behavior just as rude whoever the old man might have been? Only perhaps it took a great man, like the general, not to care for the best seat which many another would have demanded as his right.

Hundreds of years ago, in Palestine, there were men also who, puffed up with pride and importance, claimed for themselves the best seat in the synagogue and at the feasts. They were the scribes and the Pharisees, and they were the only ones at whom we know the wrath of Jesus blazed forth in words which are like vivid flashes of lightning.—Mary Stewart, in A King Among Men.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Try to be all that you seem to be.—Booker T. Washington.

Artificiality and hypocrisy tear character to pieces eventually.—M. D. Babcock.

By thy unsparing denunciation of pretence, create in me a hatred of all sham, all insincerity.—Hester Alway.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XII. Jesus among Friends and Foes.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What led Jesus to give the parable of our lesson? 2. Is it a sin to be wealthy? 3. When are riches a sin? 4. How many words did the rich farmer speak, and how many of them were the personal or the possessive pronoun? 5. What was the sin of the rich farmer? 6. Are the poor as well as the rich often covetous? 7. Is there any class exemption from the sin of covetousness. 8. What mistakes did the rich farmer make? 9. What did Jesus mean by the grass that is cast into the oven? 10. What do Prov. 13.7 and Eccl. 5.13 say about one who is poor toward God? 11. Mention some one whom you know that is rich toward God.

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A LESSON IN TRUST AND PREPAREDNESS

Golden Text

The life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. Luke 12.23

LESSON Luke 12 DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 12.22-31

LUKE 12.16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for *your* life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. 23 For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. 24 Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life? 26 If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *shall he clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.

I. A LESSON FOR THE COVETOUS RICH, verses 16-21. *A certain rich man,* so a parable of Jesus runs, whose fields yield a surplus greater than his barns will hold, propounds this query to himself, *What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?* And then he proceeds to answer his query: *This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater. And I will say to my soul* (he was talking to his stomach under the impression that he was addressing his soul, someone observes), *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.* "He does not say to it, 'Now, my soul, let us study art and music and literature.' The finer instincts have gone; his feeling for God, his enthusiasm for humanity. He has so lived that at the end of his years he has lost the capacity to live. He has made a living and unmade a life" (Jowett). "It is a shameful conception of wealth which regards it only as a means to ease and luxurious living. The ease it brings is, or should be, only the reward for the heavy responsibilities it imposes. The man who is rich by reason of the great business interests he has built up is accountable to the community for the honesty and usefulness of his service, to his hundreds or thousands of employees for such a conduct of the business as will assure them of their means of livelihood, to his own conscience for laborious and unremitting attention to the wearisome details of business management. Too often the loss of leisure, health and happiness is the penalty he pays for the luxuries he enjoys."

But God said unto him, Thou foolish one. "The rich fool made three mistakes: he mistook his body for his soul; he mistook time for eternity; and he mistook himself for God, the Ruler of all destinies" (James Orr). "Our suc-

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Eugène Burnand

THE MISER

I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.—Luke 12. 19.

cessful farmer was honest and prosperous, foreseeing and resourceful, illustrious, in all the qualities that in his day were held to constitute wisdom; and yet the Lord Jesus calls him a fool (never mind the slight softening of the phrase in the Revised Version: that is a trifle). Wherein lay the folly of this successful Mr. Worldly-Wiseman? Like the Laodiceans of a later time, he knew not that he was poor. He supposed that he could feed his soul by way of his mouth. Had he never heard that 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'? He was also in foolish error as to the nature of possession. 'Soul, thou hast *much.*' His soul had really *nothing.* When God called, the question arose—'Whose shall these things be?' All a man has in his real possession is what he can carry through death into the unseen. Our prosperous farmer also came far short of wisdom in ignoring the responsibilities of wealth. God has provided barns for superfluous corn in mouths that hunger, limbs that shiver, homes where the orphaned and the widowed sit in sorrow's company and wants. To store in these treasure-houses is the luxury as well as the duty of wealth. Finally, this man was foolish in being unprepared for death" (Garrow).

This night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? "We are only travelling through, and the bigger the pile you pile up, the harder to leave it" (Dan Crawford). There is a book in which a line of our much loved hymn, "Guide me, oh, Thou Great Jehovah" is printed, "Land *my safe* on Canaan's shore"—a thought which might have emanated from this rich fool.

Thus ends the parable of one who *laid up treasure for himself, and was not rich toward God.*

II. A LESSON FOR THE ANXIOUS POOR, verses 22-31. Turning to his disciples, Jesus bade them be not anxious about their food or raiment, *for the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment.* He who gave the life and the body, will give these lesser things.

In Matthew Jesus's next words are: *Behold the birds of the heaven,* but here in Luke we read, *Consider the ravens.* "Why the raven?" asks Dr. McLeod. "The raven is a bird of ill-omen. The law of Moses condemned it as unclean. It is black and weird and funereal. It has a hoarse, grating voice. It is rapacious, greedy, voracious. The eagle kills its prey, but the raven waits till it dies. It prefers something offensive. Then it is a very cruel creature. It is a very solitary bird. You never see more than one or two. Crows go in flocks, but you never saw a flock of ravens. No other bird seems to care for it. Now, after all this disagreeable recital, does not the verse shine out in a softer and more revealing light? If our Father cares for a raven, will he not care for his child?" The ravens *sow not, neither reap,* and they have *no storechamber nor barn*—a reference to the parable above. It is not idleness nor want of forethought which Jesus commends in the birds, but their freedom from care. One evening Luther watched a bird as it sat perched on a limb of a tree, and then he said: "This little bird has had its supper, and is now getting ready to go to sleep here, quite secure and content, never troubling itself what its food will be, or where its lodgings on the morrow. Like David, it abides under the shadow of the Almighty." *Of how much more value are you than the birds!*

In his next words Jesus brings out the futility of anxiety: *And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of your life?* Although a cubit is ordinarily a measure of space, it sometimes refers, as here, to time. Compare the saying of Queen Elizabeth when dying, "Millions of money for an inch of time!" Did fretting ever mend anything or lessen any trouble? *If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?*

Next comes a lesson from the flowers. *Consider the lilies,* said Jesus, doubtless pointing to the carpet of wild flowers all about them in the fields. *They toil not neither do they spin,* but *even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* "Jesus here shows his vivid feeling for the beauty of nature. Even the magnificence of Solomon was nothing compared with the charm of the common flowers that sprang up by the roadside. What is true of the lily was doubtless true of the whole of nature, in the eyes of Jesus" (Walker). The lesson which Jesus draws from this, in his beautiful words of the twenty-eighth verse, Whittier has put into this stanza:—

And I will trust that he who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads
And stains these mosses green and gold,
Will still, as he hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine.

And seek not food or drink or clothing, these things which *the nations of the world* are seeking, for you are children of a heavenly Father who knows *that ye have need of these things. Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.* The rich man in the parable sought secondary things first, letting the first go altogether, and he stood forth a beggar in the kingdom. Put God first; seek his kingdom; give yourself to the service of that kingdom; and leave the rest to God. "The promise is interpreted by David's testimony (Ps. 37.25) and by St. Paul's experience and assurance (Phil. 4.11, 19). So interpreted, life proves it true; those who give themselves wholly to God's service often live in poverty, but they rarely or never suffer for want of necessary food and raiment" (Abbott).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, verse 28. The term rendered *grass* includes weeds and flowers. All these wither very rapidly in the East (Compare Ps. 90.6); and owing to the scarcity of fuel, this dried vegetation is still often used to heat ovens for baking bread. The oven was a large jar made of clay, wider at the bottom. It was heated by placing the fuel within, and the ashes being removed through a hole in the bottom, the flat cakes of bread were spread both on the inside and the outside and thus baked. Sometimes it was not a movable jar, but a fixture, and the primitive contrivance was probably a hole in the earth, with compacted sides.—John A. Broadus, in Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What story about a covetous king did we have in our First Quarter's lessons? How was he denounced? What story did we have in that Quarter about a good man who in his poverty was miraculously fed?

The Occasion for the Parable of the Rich Fool. "Beware of hypocrisy," was the main theme of a great address which Jesus was once giving his disciples in the presence of a multitude so large that "they trod one upon another." As he went on to bid them trust in God's care and to confess him before men, one of his hearers, little interested in Jesus's words, because his thoughts were all upon himself and a wrong which he thought had been done him, interrupted Jesus and said, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Jesus sternly asked, and then said to all his listeners, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." And he gave them our parable to illustrate a covetous man and his fate.

TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHTS

In classes with young people who are in high school or college, teachers will find it wise now and then to link the Bible lesson with the cultural work of the secular schools. Our lesson today affords a good opportunity for such work, and it is yet simple enough for those who have not had formal rhetorical training.

Ask your pupils to find a parable in the lesson. What does it teach? Find three figures of speech. What does each teach? What is the advantage of teaching the same thing several times in different ways? Read the one verse which most tersely formulates the general principle embodying the lesson of these three comparisons.

The rhetorics tell us that figures of speech are powerful because they make us work. They force us to form mental pictures and to make comparisons.

A figure of speech must be founded on a real likeness between the things compared: are these in the lesson? The clearer the one likeness and the greater the general difference the better: is this true in these figures? They must appear spontaneous and natural: do these?

Job says, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook." That was a spontaneous and natural comparison for him to make, for he knew the brooks of the desert which dry up quickly and leave the caravans that seek them to die of thirst. Job's figure is not so profitable for us because it needs explanation. Do any of these comparisons of Jesus need explaining in any part of the world? Find other figures in Job.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: TRUE RICHES

Beginning the Lesson. In our analysis of the lesson we have called the parable given in verses 16-21 "A Lesson for the Covetous Rich," and the verses which follow, "A Lesson for the Anxious Poor." Some one has contrasted these two portions of our lesson as follows:—

The rich man's taking thought was how to make room for his abundance, the poor man's taking thought was anxiety about his want. The rich man had barns, and only needed to add to them for his riches; the poor folk had meager storehouses, and little or nothing in them, like the birds. The rich man did not need to consider what he would eat or drink, he could take his ease and be merry, the morrow had no terror for him. The poor man, on the other hand, was always worrying about food and drink, the tomorrow was an ogre to him. God's connection with the rich man is manifested in a sudden and abrupt termination of his imagined many years, a swift summoning into eternity. But the whole ground for Christ's exhortation in the discourse concerning care is the reliability and steadfastness of God where the welfare of the faithful poor in this life is concerned—not the uncertainty of tomorrow, but the certainty of tomorrow and its portion.

Thou Fool, This Night thy Soul Shall Be Required of thee: then Whose Shall Those Things Be which thou Hast Provided? Ay, whose would they be? His heirs would quarrel over his estate, and this was the outcome of it all, all his planning and striving and toiling—a lost soul and a disputed will. Truly it was a bad bargain, it was a desperately bad bargain; and the man who had made it was a fool—blind, unperceiving.

There is a grim Italian saying that "our last robe is made without pockets." And the supremely important question is what sort of things we are living for and setting our hearts upon—things which need pockets, or the things which the heart carries. It is well for us to pause from time to time amid our worldly employments and consider what the years have brought us and whether it be gain or loss. And it is so easy to determine. Perhaps they have brought us broader lands and fuller barns; and these are goodly things if only we have wisdom to use them. But have they brought us also more love and gentleness and patience and courage and faith and hope, more spiritual-mindedness, a deeper knowledge of God, a closer intimacy with Christ and a fuller sympathy with his mind and will? Whatever of temporal success or failure they may have brought us, the changeful years have brought us nothing but good if the world be less to us than it used to be and Christ more.—Dr. David Smith, in Man's Need of God.

"Good Policy." If this parable were found outside the Bible, a modern business man might say of the rich man's action: "Good policy." It is only his motive (eat, drink, and be merry) that would be condemned. Today the typical rich man, not being a farmer, would not need to pull down his barns but would simply add income to principal. The picture is absolutely true to life and reflects the business standards that have largely obtained up to the present. If the supreme aim of the individual is to amass riches, these methods are impeccable. If dividends are more important than persons, then Jesus's teachings are fallacious and hostile to the highest interests of society, for he flatly condemns fortune-hunting as a life purpose. In the mind of the rich man of the parable there is not a glimmer of social consciousness. He is the twin brother of the rich man in the story of the beggar Lazarus. Viewed through the eyes of Jesus, he is not an object of scorn and contempt but of profound pity.—Professor Charles Foster Kent, in the Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus.

At Your Peril! Let him who thinks he has escaped in his money-getting the peril of covetousness and avarice thank God; then let him hasten to take heed lest he fall. There is much food for thought in the statement of a priest that he has every conceivable fault confessed to him except one—that of penury

and stinginess. A great artist has given on canvas his conception of avarice as having the forepart of the body like a dragon and the rear part like a shapeless iceberg. It is his portrayal of the truth that the approach of avarice freezes every fine enthusiasm and generous movement of the heart. Other vices spoil different aspects of life; this one chills it at the center.—Halford E. Luccock, in Fares, Please!

A Pathetic Situation. Is there not something infinitely pathetic about a story like that of Sir Titus Salt? He is nearly seventy years of age, and, by dint of ceaseless activities and exertions, has amassed an enormous fortune. On a certain Sunday morning he saunters about his beautiful garden. He comes upon a cluster of sweet-peas. As he stoops to admire them his eye is attracted by a snail climbing painfully up one of the sticks by which the peas were supported. At last it reaches the top. It turns round and round; but there is nothing there. It turns, disappointed, and slowly descends. "It is a picture of myself," remarked the millionaire. "I have been all my life toiling and saving, and am now too old and too weary to enjoy the wealth I have accumulated!"

This condition of things is very common. Few successful men know how to enjoy their retirement. Their long-looked-for leisure, when at length it comes, is a disappointment to them. Many a prosperous merchant loiters about the house in his later days much less happy than when he went to the city every morning. He takes his leisure—as an Englishman is said to take his pleasure—sadly. The majority of such men find old age to be the dullest part of life. Many of them die after a year or two, unable to endure any longer the tedium of it all. And why? The reason is not far to seek. A thing without the spirit of the thing is a weariness to the flesh. A man who has cultivated no fondness for cricket will find a cricket-match the quintessence of boredom. To enjoy the game he must bring to it the spirit of the game. And to enjoy leisure you must bring to your leisure a leisurely spirit. The man who has spent his life restlessly will find rest intolerable.—F. W. Boreham, in The Silver Shadow.

The Peril of Much Goods Laid Up. Wealth, acquired as it often is, is ruinous to the characters of those who win it. Two per cent of the people in the United States own sixty per cent of the wealth. If by the poor we mean those whose possession consists only of clothing, furniture, and personal belongings to the value of four hundred dollars each, then one man in the United States owns as much as two million five hundred thousand of his fellow-citizens. That is perilous to the commonwealth; but it is also perilous to the rich. When one sees a wealthy man, who, honorably fortunate, is as simple in his life and as sensitive in his conscience as when he was a boy, as amiable, approachable, democratic, fraternal, and generous as when his business life began, we have seen one of the most difficult and admirable spiritual victories that a man can win. But consider Henry Ward Beecher's vivid and precise description of the other type:—

"There are men of wealth in New York, honored because prosperous, who heap up riches, and hoard them, and live in a magnificent selfishness. They use the whole of society as a cluster to be squeezed into their cup. They are neither active in any enterprise of good, except for their own prosperity, nor generous to their fellows. They build palaces, and fit them sumptuously; but the poor starve and freeze around them. No struggling creature of the army of the weak ever blesses them. And yet their names are heralded. They walk in spacious and spectacular honor. Men flatter them and fawn upon them. Dying, the newspapers, like so many trumpets in procession, go blaring after them to that grave over which should be inscribed the text of Scripture, 'The name of the wicked shall rot.'"—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Service.

Dost thou Prosper?

They tell me thou art rich, my country, gold
In glittering flood has poured into thy chest;
Thy flocks and herds increase, thy barns are pressed
With harvest, and thy stores can hardly hold
Their merchandise; unending trains are rolled
Along thy network rails of East and West;
Thy factories and forges never rest;
Thou art enriched in all things bought and sold!
But dost thou prosper? Better news I crave,
O dearest country, is it well with thee

Indeed, and is thy soul in health?
A nobler people, hearts more wisely brave,
And thoughts that lift men up and make them free,—
These are prosperity and vital wealth!

—Dr. Van Dyke.

Seek ye His Kingdom. It takes a much more developed imagination nowadays for a workman to see how he is seeking God's kingdom than it used to require. A shoemaker of old would look at the crowds hurrying by and smile: "There go my shoes taking old Mrs. Brown's dinner to her, and hurrying with the doctor to his patients, and jumping around with the youngest Smith child so that it makes people happy to see her." A man who cuts uppers all day long does not see these relations so clearly. He thinks about what part of the money received for the factory output comes to him, and what part goes to the company. Still less does the owner of stock in the shoe company feel, when he gets his dividend, that "This is what comes to me from the investment of money in a factory. How glad I am that the investment has enabled many men and women to go about in comfortable shoes, and a good many men and women to get a comfortable living by making these shoes." If all those people had sufficiently far-sighted imaginations and sought first the Kingdom of God, there would be industrial friendship, not industrial strife.

Divide society into three classes:

1. Those who have, or make, more money than they need to spend in living comfortably.

2. Those who make just about enough for comfortable living, with enough put by to do away with fear of the future.

3. Those who work early and late at labor so hard that they become worn out before fifty, and who have little or nothing put by.

To which of these classes will it be easiest to obey the principle taught in the lesson?

What will be the motive leading the people at the top of the middle class to violate the principle? From what motive will people at the bottom of the middle class violate it?

A school teacher in a small town has a salary of $1200 a year, and does not expect ever to receive more. She and her mother live on this salary in a cottage which the mother owns. Her brother keeps a store in the village, and has several clerks. He prospers and has twice enlarged his store. Which of the two will find it easier to live according to the principle of this lesson? Why?

Two maiden aunts were left without a home on the death of their father. "Clara and I must each take one sister into the family," said Brother John at the breakfast table. "Let's have Aunt Fannie," cried the children. "Aunt Jennie says, 'I can't if it isn't just so,' but Aunt Fannie says, 'Isn't it delightful that it is just so?' but if it's some other way she doesn't mind." Which of these aunts was probably applying the principle in verse 31?

And These Things Shall be Added unto you. He was once a rich man. And he was a poet. He lost all his money and all his people, and we, who had been his friends, lost sight of him. One day, in the Library, we thought we recognized him. We asked a librarian about him.

"Yes," said he, "it is Mr. Blank. He draws a good many books from here, and he lives at the Poor House."

We went next day to the Poor House and found him, placid, poetical, good, as in the old days.

"It is hard," said we, "that you who have always been honest and good should come to this."

"Why, no," said he, "it is not really hard except as I make it so. I have all that God promised me: food, raiment, shelter, even kindness. These people treat me well. Jesus never promised satisfaction for pride."

In seeking first God's Kingdom he had learned to care most for God's Kingdom, and the way in which the incidental essentials were added had become unimportant.

We induced an acquaintance who published a small weekly paper to ask him for poetical contributions and to let us pay for them. He was delighted with his checks, and spent them in getting needed articles for some of his Poor House friends. "It is delightful, when you can't do much for people, to be able to spend even a little for them," said he.

For Discussion. 1. The generosity of Jesus. See chapter 16 of The Character of Jesus, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

2. The lure of money-making.

3. The vast army of men and women who never make connection between the years of accumulating and the years of enjoyment.

4. The trouble with some greater-barn-builders. A very rich young man went to one of the most resourceful and intelligent of his friends and said: "Will someone write out exact specifications of what else there is to do for a man in my circumstances besides making money?" And the friend was stumped.

Men do not keep on making money primarily because they resemble Alexander the Great or Napoleon, but because it's all in the day's work; because there is nothing else for them to do. In other words, they are perfectly human, not in any awe-inspiring, different way, but in precisely the same way as other men. Let us be perfectly specific and concrete. Take the case of Frank Woolworth, who built up the chain of stores bearing his name and who died last year leaving a fortune of some fifty million dollars. Mr. Woolworth started a new enterprise, one for which there was a definite need, one which had no end of possibilities of growth. Just where was Mr. Woolworth to stop? Should he have stopped at a hundred stores just because he happened to have enough money at that time to support himself the rest of his life? Of course he was just as anxious to see the enterprise which he started successful at one stage as at another. Otherwise he would have been a freak or a lunatic. He was just as anxious to make good when there were many stores as when there was one. Is a man to be deprived of the sense of achievement of making good, of overcoming obstacles, of success, just because his personal income happens to be large?—Albert W. Atwood, in The Saturday Evening Post.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: RICH TOWARD GOD

Beginning the Lesson. The main object of a certain man and his wife was to accumulate enough for their old age. They began their married life with *thrift* as their motto. "It became part of their decalogue to look out for the last cent in dealing, in planning, in picking up ends," said a friend of theirs. Later in life, neighbors used to wonder why living on the west side of the street they invariably crossed over and walked on the east side. It was a question of wearing out the walks. In summer evenings the man would sit on the hard benches in the park and read the newspaper when he would have been much more comfortable at home. "He counted that he had never received full value for all that he had paid in taxes and he could get back a bit of his share by sitting an hour or two each day on those public benches." Is thrift a virtue? The man in our parable today had it. What had he accumulated? Was there anything wrong about this? To what did thrift lead in the experience of the couple of whom we have just spoken? To what did it lead in the case of the "certain rich man"?

(Follow with the Text Explained.)

A Great Responsibility. "A great fortune is a splendid servitude," wrote Seneca, the great millionaire of the first century. In the twentieth century Carnegie expressed the same idea when he said of rich men, "At first they own the money they have made and saved. Later in life the money owns them."—The Youth's Companion.

A Lesson in Preparedness. The king gave his court fool a staff, telling him to keep it until he met a greater fool than himself. By and by the king fell sick and said to the fool, "I'm going to leave you." "Where are you going?" asked the merrymaker. "Into another world," answered the monarch. "When are you coming back?" "Never!" "What provision have you made for your journey?" "None." "Here take the staff, for with all my folly I'm not so great a fool as that!"

"In Grecian annals it remained untold,
But may be read in Eastern legend old,
How, when great Alexander died, he bade
That his two hands uncovered might be laid
Outside the bier for men therewith to see—
Men who had seen him in his majesty—

That he had gone the common way of all,
And nothing now his own in death might call;
Nor of the treasures of his empires aught
Within those empty hands into the grave had brought."

Rich toward God. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Our Lord gives us this injunction to put us on our guard against selfishness. The rich man in the parable had not one thought of God; he had nothing for religion; nothing for bettering the conditions of the poor and needy.

In a remarkable vision in the Book of Revelation, the glorified Son of Man sends this message to the citizens of Sardis: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," etc. How this characterization befits many in our time, who imagine themselves well-to-do, who pride themselves on their abundance and think they have need of nothing, whereas in truth their poverty is of the most pitiable and deplorable kind—they are "wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked."

What a lesson to us all that our hearts be not set upon temporal treasures, but that we be "rich toward God." That we be rich in faith, in love, in the knowledge of God and in service to him. That we be rich in piety and in Christlike graces. That we practice unselfishness and open-handedness to the Lord's call for work and means to advance his kingdom.—J. B. Remen Snyder, in The Christian Herald.

The Inventory of the Estate of a Man who Was Rich toward God. "Every year he invested not less than twelve hundred dollars in charity, and invested it so secretly, so inoffensively and so honestly that he was never suspected of being a philanthropist, and never praised for his generosity. He pensioned an old, outcast woman and a disabled veteran soldier. He sent two little boys to school, and for three years supported a family of five persons who could not support themselves. He contributed anonymously to every charity in the city. Every woman interested in a 'benevolent object' received his aid; every child that he knew exacted and received penny tolls from his tenderness. He supported with encouragement and affection the heart of every man who confided in him. He literally did forgive his enemies, and he was ever one of the largest bondholders in heaven."

These words were written of an aged minister who died not long ago. The writer was his widow, who, in the remarkable document quoted above, thus names the assets which her husband accumulated during a long life of toil and of riding the circuit. As for money on hand at the time of his death, he had two dollars and thirty-five cents in his purse and one hundred and sixteen dollars in the bank.—The Youth's Companion.

Seek ye His Kingdom, and These Things Shall Be Added unto You. "Sammy," as John Wesley affectionately called him, was a local preacher, that is, he worked for a living and preached also. One time when he was ill he received this note from Wesley, accompanied by two five-pound notes:

"Dear Sammy. Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed."

And the local preacher wrote in reply: "Dear John. I never in all my life have seen such practical notes on any passage of Scripture as those received from you this day."

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

"To men of greed, however great their store,
'Enough' is always 'Just a little more.'"

I ask not wealth, but power to take
And use the things I have aright.—Phoebe Cary.

He is not poor that hath little, but he that desireth much.—George Herbert.

Get all you can without hurting your soul, your body, or your neighbor; save all you can; give all you can.—John Wesley.

They's nothin' patheticker'n jes' a-bein' rich!—James Whitcomb Riley.

Give me neither poverty nor riches, lest I be feeble and deny thee, or lest I be poor and steal.—Proverbs.

Pupils' Note-Book Work. XIII. A Lesson for the Covetous Rich and Another for the Anxious Poor.

REVIEW

Golden Text

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. Luke 4.18

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 98

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS'S MINISTRY

There is no study so important for the student of religion as that of the life and teaching of Jesus the Founder of Christianity.

Between his Infancy and his Manhood the only recorded event of his life is that of his visit to the temple at the age of twelve. But "since that day in the temple, Jesus has been the central problem of the historian, the philosopher, the social reformer, of every generation. He constantly asks questions; and just as we do not read that the doctors of Jerusalem supplied any answers—indeed, what astonished them were the answers of Jesus—so in every generation all the wisdom of the world has to return to him as the only Resolver of perplexities."

From that scene where the learned rabbis were astonished at his words, Jesus returned to Nazareth and was subject unto his parents—he was an obedient Son. A small but sturdy boy stood by the bedside of his invalid mother, received her orders, started to obey them, and then suddenly came back to her side. "Mother, why do I mind you?" he queried. "You are not strong enough to *make* me." Nor was Mary strong enough to make her Son obey her: did he realize why he did so?

During those hidden years in Nazareth he was growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Can this be said of us? "I am always learning more of new and good things, for life is full of things to be learned," declares Marquis Okuma. "I am over eighty, and I cannot help looking old. But that is a physical matter; my mind, my spirit, is young. I am still a young student, still in the process of learning and never reaching completion." One of the characters in a story by O. Henry says of the people in the town where he lived: "Everybody here dies when he gets about twenty-one and doesn't do anything but snore and toss around in his sleep the rest of his life." With Edwin Markham we question:—

Why build these cities glorious
If man unbuilded goes?
In vain we build the work, unless
The builder also grows.

"If we grow old in years, but still wear the spiritual garments of childhood, we must appear as pathetically grotesque to those 'who look with other eyes than ours' as a full grown man would look to us if he were wearing the hat of a little child," suggests Dr. Jowett. "Our conceptions of the Lord are no bigger than they were when we first met him. Our sympathies are no richer, no more comprehensive. Our prayers have not increased in grasp and range. We are pitiable specimens of arrested growth."

The revelation that he was to be the world's Messiah came to Jesus at his baptism: there at the Jordan he dedicated himself to the work which God purposed for him, and there he was empowered for his mission. And immediately afterwards in the wilderness he faced and solved the question as to what sort of Messiah he should be. Not the Messiah whom the people were expecting—one who would perform miracles merely as miracles, lead them against their foes, free them forever from their conquerors, and become the earthly ruler of all the kingdoms of the world—but the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, the Redeemer from sin, the spiritual Ruler of the world.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Jesus's ministry was his sympathy for the poor and the afflicted, his spending of self freely in ministering to them. Some one has said that at the beginning of the Christian era there was a place by the Sheep Market in Jerusalem where the lame and the halt and the withered

were placed to await the moving of the waters, and that was the best hospital of the time; and on the other side of Gennesaret, in the land of the Gadarenes, a poor demoniac had his dwelling among the tombs, and that was the best insane asylum of the time. No heathen nation ever established a hospital for her own people. All systematic effort for the relief of the sick has come since Jesus went about doing good. The specific instances of Jesus's healing power taken up in our lessons have been the cure of the palsied man and the restoration to sanity of the demoniac of Gadara, but many other miracles are recorded in these first twelve chapters of Luke: what are they?

In our lesson about Jesus as the Great Teacher we stressed his words about the treatment of enemies and the keeping of the Golden Rule. "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you," are his words of command to us. And then in a later lesson we heard him denounce the hostile Pharisees in no unmeasured terms. Why? There was severity as well as gentleness in Jesus. Wrong-doing must not be overlooked to the harm of the wrong-doers.

Several parables of the Great Teacher have come under discussion this Quarter: the parables of the Two Debtors, of the Good Samaritan, and of the Rich Fool. Just as on the stage a sage-green curtain with lights thrown upon it produces the effect of waving leaves and branches of trees in an illimitable forest, while real trees on a stage remain only separate trees instead of a forest, since they can always be counted; so Jesus's parables, fictitious representations of reality, produce more lasting impressions than many separate happenings in life could effect.

Jesus's public ministry lasted but three years. "For great achievement such a brief space is like yesterday when it is past!" exclaims Dean Charles Reynolds Brown. "How many years Alexander and Cæsar and Cromwell and Napoleon wrought in the accomplishment of their work, yet their impress fades and dims, while the impress of the One born in Bethlehem brightens with the centuries."

Questions upon the Quarter's Lessons. What are the qualifications of a good teacher? What examples of these qualifications have we seen in Jesus in these lessons?

What are the qualifications of a good physician? How has Jesus shown these qualifications?

Where did Jesus put the greater emphasis, on his teaching or on his healing? What sect today puts the greater emphasis upon healing, and why is this irrational?

What light have these lessons thrown upon the human side of Jesus? What light upon the Divine side?

What story is the great classic on the subject of practical Christianity?

Is the Golden Rule applicable in industry? In international relations?

Give a review of the first twelve chapters of Luke.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What other cures did Jesus make on the Sabbath? 2. Read Mk. 2.27,28; Lk. 6.3,5,9, and Jn. 5.16,17, and give the arguments which Jesus used against the charge of Sabbath-breaking. 3. How did the Pharisees keep the Sabbath? 4. How did Jesus keep it? 5. How do we keep the Lord's Day? 6. What are some of the things which the Pharisees said should not be done on the Sabbath? 7. Is there growing laxity in the keeping of Sunday? 8. What do you think are some of the right uses of the Lord's Day? 9. Is Sunday base-ball permissible for working people? 10. What makes for irregularity in church attendance by church members?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
GREAT EVENTS OF JESUS'S MINISTRY

We have come to the end of our Quarter's lessons in which we have seen Jesus teaching, preaching and healing in that long ago. We began with the announcement of the birth of his forerunner, John the Baptist; recalled the birth of Jesus, his visit to the temple at twelve years of age, and his growth in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men; witnessed the ministry of John the Baptist which prepared the way for Jesus's ministry; reverently listened while Jesus told of his temptations in the wilderness and grasped in part the meaning of those temptations; saw him as a Great Physician exercising his

power to heal disease and to forgive sin in the case of the palsied man and of the demon of Gadara; listened to his words as the Great Teacher when he gave principles that should govern us in our living with others; saw him as the Friend of sinners accept the loving deed of a sinner on whom he had had great compassion; considered his method of enlarging his work by sending out missionaries as his helpers; listened to his parable of the Good Samaritan with its reminder to us to go and do likewise; took heed of his gentleness to his friends and severity to his foes; and heard his parable about the Foolish Rich Man with its message to us of wherein consist true riches.

Have you fully realized what a great physical and nervous strain his work of healing must have put upon Jesus? A physician today comes home from his rounds tired and worn, and in times of epidemic actually physically exhausted. Often Jesus must have been equally exhausted, for "whithersoever he went they laid the sick in the streets and—yet there is no hint of any impatience or irritation at the constant demands made upon him. Dr. J. D. Jones writes: "I think that our Lord must have been especially sensitive to the appeal of pain, because he did not wait for stricken folk to cry out to him; his healing energy went out to them before they asked for it. He could not pass a blind man or a lame man or a palsied man or a leper without wishing to cure him. He healed all manner of sickness and all manner of disease, so that men as they watched him were reminded of that great prophetic word which says, 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.' Our Lord never disparaged the body or made light of its pain. The body was a sacred thing to him. To minister to it was part of his calling. And the doctor is in the line of succession to Christ in this part of his work. The man who lessens the world's pain and ministers to the world's sickness and helps broken men and women back to health, is doing a holy work. Every doctor ought to be a good man, for to him the griefs and sorrows and haunting sins of the soul are disclosed, and he doubles his effectiveness as a doctor, if, while seeking to cure the body, he can also speak a word of comfort for the help of the sick soul."

We have two ways of judging a man—by what he says and by what he does. Which is the more reliable? A man's words may express his ideals, but his life may fall far short of living up to those ideals. "Never man spake like this Man," every one admits, and no one has ever attempted to show that Jesus did not fully live up to his words. He actually was the perfect Man that he exhorted others to become. His *life* is the light of man. He is "The Master Christian."

Procure from the public library or art museum many pictures of Jesus, and then let each member of the class choose which of these comes nearest to his ideal of Jesus the Christ, and also tell wherein each picture falls short thereof. You will thus gain a notion of what Jesus stands for to your pupils, and you will help them to an ennobled realization of his greatness.

Questions upon the Quarter's Lessons. What was the great message of the herald of Jesus? What rite gave him his name, and what did he symbolize by that rite? What was the meaning of his baptism to Jesus himself?

What is repentance? How does it differ from remorse? What are the motives to repentance? What are the proofs of repentance?

How must the story of Jesus's temptation have become known? Explain the nature of each temptation.

Who is your neighbor? What does it mean to "love thy neighbor as thyself"? What are the great obstacles to neighborliness, and how may they be overcome?

What means did Jesus take to enlarge his work?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does "a spirit of infirmity," verse 11, mean? 2. Whom did the ruler aim to censure by his words of verse 14? 3. How did Jesus show that he understood him? 4. Which of the Ten Commandments refers to the keeping of the Sabbath? 5. What is the commandment? 6. Where in the Bible is it found? 7. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath? 8. Why do we keep Sunday in a different way from other days? 9. What do you think are some of the right uses of the Lord's Day? 10. What do you think are some of the wrong uses of that day?

Note. There is a missionary who would welcome this book. In his field this course of lessons is studied next year. His address will be furnished by Dr. Price. See page 407.

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E. Amadon

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